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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Al-Hirawi Addresses Arab Parliamentary Union

NC1705133596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1125 GMT 17 May 96

[Speech by Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi at the final APU session held at the Qana Secondary School in Qana, south Lebanon—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beloved ones. We thank you for your initiative to move from your conference venue in Damascus to the heart of the south so as to declare your recommendations. Your solidarity with us is the most noble condolence. We welcome you not in order to cry over the innocent victims but so that we can all work together to prevent Lebanon from remaining an easy prey for injustice and aggression.

I cried over you O Qana and cried over your children, my sons. [applause] I cried over my kinsmen, sisters, sons, the young, and the old. Someone told me: Why are you crying? We do not want to turn Qana into a wailing wall [applause] because Lebanon is too strong to become a victim no matter how much they delude themselves into believing that it is a forsaken land or just a number in an equation. Lebanon always remembers that those who shed its blood — and this was done in the past — only drown in its hemorrhage forever. [applause]

Qana is where Jesus Christ, the messenger of love and peace, walked and where he performed his first miracles. Qana is where Christians and Muslims become brothers. [applause] It is this Qana on which Israel imposed this massacre. It is the symbol of Lebanon's cause and of the cause of uniting the Arabs. And here they are. [applause] Lebanon's cause is Israel's occupation of precious parts of its soil. Lebanon's cause is Israel's challenge to the implementation of Resolution 425 and its disregard for the will of international legitimacy and its resolutions. Lebanon's cause is Israel's unrestricted invasion of our country from land, air, and territorial waters, thus exercising the most vicious aggressions against our kinsmen and their possessions and against our economy, vital installations, and our archaeological and tourist resources of which we are proud. [applause] Lebanon's cause is its insistence on pursuing the course of right and dignity. It does so regardless of the price. Let it be known that the price for capitulation is more costly. [applause]

Any expected peace should be built, dear brothers, on strong foundations. Do we develop the possibilities of peace through massacres? Does Israel want us to nurture our children and coming generations on grudges and revenge, so that the dictum "remember, o child, that your enemy is Israel" is ingrained in them, as we say at the beginning of our blessed Lent, "remember, o man, the dictum ashes to ashes, dust to dust?" [applause]

If Israel's power lies in its military aggression, then our power, my beloved, lies in our unity, [applause] in our adherence to justice, in our attachment to international legitimacy, in our belief in Arab honor, in our deep roots in our land. Proceeding from all this, we have remained steadfast in the face of Israel. Lebanon's unity is increasing in force at the same ratio as the Arab solidarity with Lebanon is increasing, which is what we are demanding from you, dear brothers and friends. [applause]

Here, together with you, we are eager to thank the United Nations which gave me the chance to present the cause of Lebanon from its podium in the name of all of Lebanon. In the name of Lebanon, I praise the efforts of the honorable international forces operating in Lebanon and their sacrifices to support our national sovereignty.

Dear fraternal parliamentarians, we welcome you in your capacity as the source of legislation in your fraternal countries, while you take the stance to announce in words and deeds that all the Arabs are with Lebanon, all the Arabs support Lebanon's rights. [applause] Allow me to be rather frank and to say that this day has much significance for us, since it is 17 May. Dear brothers, we entered the Madrid conference unified for the sake of a just and comprehensive peace. As Lebanese, we did not go to Madrid for Resolution 425. This resolution does not require a peace conference. We took part in the Madrid conference to confirm Arab solidarity. If some [Arab] brothers believe that their peace can take place via this road or that, then we and fraternal Syria defend just and comprehensive peace because it is the only peace that can restore rights and that has the makings for a real shift from destruction to construction. [applause]

Dear brothers, dignity comes first, and then comes peace, [applause] because there can be no peace without dignity. Your stance alongside Lebanon is a stance alongside just and comprehensive peace. The objective behind the recent calamity was to stop Lebanon's reconstruction. Another objective was to hamper Lebanon's role in the region and the world. Yet a third objective of the recent crisis was to paralyze progress. The response to these objectives lies in standing alongside Lebanon. And standing alongside Lebanon means we need to exert efforts to stop Lebanon from being the arena where the steam of the region's conflicts can be let off or where settlements can be arranged. I repeat: We need to exert effort to stop Lebanon from being the arena where the steam of the region's conflicts can be let off or where settlements can be arranged. Because of the Palestinian cause, which we, the Lebanese, consider holy, Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978, and then again in 1982 all the way to the capital, Beirut. And as a result of the struggle between the partial peace plans and the comprehensive peace plans in the 1980's, the arbitrary practices against Lebanon have not stopped.

With the signing of the unilateral peace agreements in the 1990's, the south was turned into a scorched land.

Dear brothers, Lebanon is defending its Arab brothers and is paying with its blood on behalf of its Arab brothers. [applause] The blood of our innocent children, women, the old, and the young is crying out for help from the Arab conscience. Support the Arab League so that you can become worthier of the Arab status, ability, and ambition 50 years after its establishment.

Here I ask: Where are the Arab values that we have inherited from our history?

The situation is this: Israel is violating Lebanon's sovereignty while, regrettably, the domestic problems are wearing down some fraternal countries. Standing behind Lebanon means supporting it in its reconstruction process. The true commitment to Arabism requires you to fulfill your pledges to reconstruct Lebanon. The chivalry of brotherhood dictates that brothers should be the first to come to help rebuild the Lebanese entity.

Lebanon's peace is the peace of all the Arabs because Lebanon's renaissance was, as you recall, a renaissance for all the Arabs. Lebanon's hell means hell for all the Arabs because, as you can observe, Lebanon's hell has not spared anyone in this region from retreating on more than one front. When I was a student, the streets of Beirut and other areas were noisy with demonstrations. Lebanon contributed all possible help whenever the Arabs were in trouble. Today, Lebanon is under fire but it will remain confident of the brothers' solidarity with its cause. [applause]

O brother parliamentarians. We are eager to implement the April understanding. We regard Israel's commitment to the spirit and letter of this understanding as a test of its intentions and of its respect for international legitimacy. Time must not be exhausted in a tug of war ploy over interpretations that were not included in this understanding in the first place. There must be no distraction from the basic issue which is the implementation of Resolution 425 and the restoration of our occupied territories in the south and western al-Biqa' [applause] up to the internationally recognized borders. There can be no liberation of the south and western al- Biqa' before liberation of the Golan and no liberation of the Golan before liberation of the south and western al-Biqa'. [applause]

Dear brothers. All Lebanon supports the just and comprehensive peace. All Lebanon is against capitulation, the occupation of land, the fragmentation of the entity, and the violation of national sovereignty.

If peace is really wanted, then why is it not wanted until tombs are dug? If peace is really wanted, then why is it not wanted on the basis of justice? That is what we have learned from Arabism. [applause]

Dear parliamentarians. From the land of Qana, the south, and all Lebanon, take back to your countries the message that Lebanon is the homeland that has risen from the dead. Convey to my brothers their majesties, excellencies, and highnesses Lebanon's appreciation for your fraternal countries' commendable aid and support.

The challenges facing the Arabs are not tackled by political measures alone. There is a need for a rejuvenated Arab awakening. The first step in this awakening is the liberation of the territories, consolidation of solidarity for the sake of development, and a deepening of the awareness of the modern scientific and cultural developments before we miss the train.

Strengthening democracy and freedom is the prelude for enlightenment, for building institutions, for developing societies, and for achieving progress, particularly as the Middle East is heading toward economic, security, water, oil, political, and competition arrangements that might cause radical upheavals in this region's conditions, God forbid.

Dear ones. You came here so that we could listen to you and hear your recommendations. We do not have words or actions other than our steadfastness, sacrifices, and defense of our legal and legitimate rights. Rest assured that Lebanon will remain faithful to the brothers and friends. May you live long. May your Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] conference live long. Long live Lebanon free from occupation. [applause]

Inter-Arab: APU Issues Resolution on Lebanon

NC1705130596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1105 GMT 17 May 96

[Resolution issued by the APU in Qana, south Lebanon; read by APU closing session moderator—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Your Excellency Mr. President, Your Excellency Speaker of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, Venerable speakers, brothers, and sisters. May God's peace, mercy, and blessings be with you.

The following is the text of the resolution pertaining to Lebanon that was adopted by the 27th session of the Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] Council.

1. The APU Council condemns and denounces the repeated Israeli assaults on Lebanon, particularly the latest treacherous aggression and its attendant massacres against Lebanese civilians, particularly the five massacres in al-Nabatiyah, Suhmur, al- Mansurah, al-Jumayjimah, and Qana and its devastation of the infrastructure and economic installations. It demands that pressure be brought to bear on Israel to halt its expansionism, confiscation of lands, its displacement of inhabitants, its restrictions on the citizens' freedom of movement, and its theft of historical relics. It demands that Israel pay reparations for the damage it caused to Lebanon as a result of its attacks and release the Lebanese detainees who are being held in Israeli jails and al-Khiyam prison in the occupied Lebanese territories. [applause]

2. The APU Council condemns Israel's brutal massacre against innocent civilians who took shelter at the positions of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon in Qana in April. It regards this as an act of organized state crime and demands that those responsible for this act be put on trial as war criminals in accordance with international law. [applause]

3. The APU Council urges the international community to use all methods to exert pressure on Israel to make it implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 calling for the Israeli forces' unconditional withdrawal from south Lebanon and western al-Biqa' in line with the provisions of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. [applause]

4. The APU Council emphasizes the Lebanese people's right to resist Israeli occupation [applause], a right guaranteed by international law and conventions.

The APU Council salutes the Lebanese national resistance [applause] which is engaged in a struggle to liberate its occupied territories.

5. The APU Council urges that all forms of support be extended to the Lebanese national resistance and appeals to the Arab countries to fulfill their commitments in bolstering Lebanon's steadfastness and aiding its reconstruction. Thank you. [applause]

Inter-Arab: APU Issues Final Communique

JN1805082196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] Council condemned Israel's continued hostile policy, attempts to obstruct a just, comprehensive peace, and evasion of the requirements of peace. This came in the final communique issued by the APU Council s 27th session which was held in Damascus 15-16 May in the presence of delegations representing the Arab parliamentary sections.

The APU Council decided to unanimously hold its final session in Qana, southern Lebanon, in a show of the Arab parliamentarians' solidarity with the brotherly Lebanese people. It also decided to consider President Hafiz al-Asad's speech at the inauguration ceremony a basic document of the APU session.

The communique urges the international community to support and bolster the Middle East peace process and to demand full Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories back to the 4 June 1967 lines in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, as well as Resolution 425 on Lebanon, and the land-for-peace principle. The statement calls for taking the required initiatives to restore coordination among Arab stands in all that is related to the peace process.

The communique supports the Arab League's stand which links the boycott of Israel to the arrival at a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem on all tracks. The statement expresses the APU Council's support for Syria's struggle to liberate the occupied Golan Heights and for the Syrian Arab citizens' steadfastness in the Golan as they confront the Israeli occupation and adhere to their land and Syrian Arab identity. It stresses that the Israeli Knesset decision to annex the Syrian Golan is null and void in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 467 of 1981. The statement calls for applying the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to the citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

The APU Council adopted a special resolution on Lebanon in which it denounced the latest assaults on Lebanon, particularly the recent treacherous aggression and its attendant massacres against innocent civilians. It also denounced the brutal massacre against civilians who took shelter at the UN positions in Qana. It regarded this as an act of systematic state terrorism and demanded that those responsible for that act be put on trial as war criminals in accordance with international law. It also urged the international community to use all methods to exert pressure on Israel to make it implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 calling for the Israeli forces' unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon and western al-Biqa'. It also emphasized the Lebanese people's right to resist the Israeli occupation, and called for securing all forms of support for the Lebanese national resistance, and appealed to the Arab countries to fulfill their commitments in bolstering Lebanon's steadfastness and aiding its reconstruction.

The final communique calls for adopting a unified Arab position on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear and all weapons of mass destruction. It also calls for condemning Israel for its refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and for bringing its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It stresses the need to develop a common Arab view to address the possible and serious effects resulting from the radioactive leakage from the Israeli Dimona reactor which threatens the Arab environment.

The communique calls for supporting the Palestinian people's struggle under the leadership of the PLO in confronting threats, settlement activity, and land confiscations. It also calls for the release of detainees and for Israel's withdrawal from the remainder of the occupied Palestinian territories in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. It calls for extending all forms of financial support to improve the social and economic infrastructure of the steadfast Palestinian people.

It stresses the Palestinian people's right to repatriation in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194 and the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. It denounces all measures aimed at changing the Islamic and Christian characteristics and demographic composition of holy Jerusalem. The communique regards Israel's decision to annex Jerusalem null and void and stresses its Arab identity.

The communique calls on the governments of Arab and Islamic countries to rally their resources in defense of holy Jerusalem and its holy status. It calls on the U.S. Administration to maintain its rejection of Congress' resolution on moving the U.S. Embassy to occupied Jerusalem. It calls for action to implement the resolution on Jerusalem issued by the APU's 26th extraordinary session in Amman in January 1996.

Concerning Arab solidarity and ways to enhance it, and the challenges posed by the current international developments, the council adopted several important resolutions calling for a unified Arab stand that stems from a common visualization and that is based on effective Arab solidarity that will be capable of securing the requirements of steadfastness and confrontation.

The council calls for enhancing Arab awareness of the importance of the changes our world is currently experiencing on all levels, the importance of joint action and positive interaction with these developments in a manner that safeguards security, stability, and continued comprehensive development and ensures the tackling of political, security, economic, technological, scientific, and cultural challenges the Arab homeland faces at the threshold of the 21st century.

In its communique, the council refers to the challenges resulting from relations with neighbor countries and the disputes and pressing problems these relations create over land, water, borders, and other issues, and the attempts to interfere in the Arab countries' domestic affairs.

The communique notes the challenge posed by the process of attaining development in the Arab homeland, and called for the mobilization of all Arab potential and resources in accordance with strategic plans that enable the Arab nation to deal from a position of strength with the giant economic blocs that control world economies.

The communique emphasizes the principles and requisites on which work for reviving Arab solidarity should be based. These include safeguarding the unity of the Arab order by not keeping away any of its countries, the strict abidance by the principle of noninterference by any Arab country in the affairs of any other Arab country, the establishment of a purely Arab security system and a big economic entity, and emphasizing the Arab League's role. The council also calls for an Arab initiative for tackling matters on the basis of the Arab League's principles and objectives. It also calls for an Arab summit as early as possible to discuss how to revive Arab solidarity. The council calls for the necessary legislation to enhance and develop public liberties and protect human rights, entrench democracy in the Arab homeland, enhance the role of the Arab League and develop its charter in a manner that will activate its role of tackling Arab crises in accordance with a mechanism to be agreed upon. The council also calls for a joint Arab plan to confront cultural invasion that is hostile to the Arab nation, and to entrust the APU president with the task of contacting Arab leaders and officials to help clear up Arab differences.

On the current crisis between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah and some western countries, the council welcomed the flexible stands adopted by Libya and its efforts for a just solution to this disagreement.

On the recent Israeli-Turkish military agreement, the council said that the agreement is a step that is incompatible with the relations of good neighborliness and is a violation of the Organization of Islamic Conference resolutions that Turkey had accepted. The council emphasized Syrian and Iraqi rights to the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, and called on Turkey to take into consideration good neighborliness and to abide by international laws and norms in this respect.

The council also adopted several decisions having to do with parliamentary affairs on the APU and inter-Parliamentary Union level, and decisions concerning plans of action and finance issues.

Inter-Arab: Paper Reports Jordan-Egypt Contacts To Expand Jun Summit

JN1805110396 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 18 May 96 pp 1, 27

[Report by Fathi Khattab in Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Text] A ranking responsible political source said that the Arab arena is currently witnessing Jordanian-Egyptian contacts to hold an expanded Arab summit in Amman during the first week of next month in order to discuss developments in the Arab and regional arenas. The source added that the intensified Egyptian-Jordanian contacts with a number of Arab countries fall within the framework of clearing the Arab atmosphere and removing differences. This is in order to return to coordination among the five Arab cordon states, given the participation of Syria and Lebanon in the Amman summit, in a first expanded meeting and in order to revive a coordination mechanism among the Arab parties directly concerned with the peace negotiations — a mechanism that was applicable for more than three years following the Madrid peace conference. The source said that contacts between Jordan and Egypt are aimed at overcoming differences and narrowing gaps, which have allowed Israel to repeatedly attack Lebanon and maneuver within the negotiating tracks, which proved the Israeli negotiator's inclination toward prevarication, gaining time, and investing in Arab differences to serve Israel's interest.

The official political source noted the possibility of holding a five-way summit in Amman, which has become a very important issue under the current Arab circumstances and regional and international developments. The source said that Syria did not have any reservations about holding an expanded summit and that Egyptian-Syrian contacts, which recently dealt with views on expanding Arab coordination, affirmed the need to unify Arab stands and agree on a joint Arab vision to support the Arab negotiator within the negotiating tracks. The source said that Egyptian-Jordanian contacts aim to prepare the climate for expanding this summit later on to include other Arab countries as an alternative to a comprehensive Arab summit. This is so that efforts to achieve Arab reconciliation would allow for resolving bilateral differences.

In another development, Arab diplomatic sources in Cairo expect Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to visit Damascus during the next few days to brief President al-Asad on latest developments and to discuss the results of the tripartite Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian summit, which called for supporting the Arab negotiator, clearing the Arab atmosphere, and returning to coordination among Arab states to confront the repercussions of the current Arab situation on the negotiating tracks. The two sides are expected to exchange opinions on Syria's and Lebanon's participation in the Amman summit in early June, close the file on differences among the Arab cordon states, and agree on a unified Arab formula within the framework of rescuing the peace process and reviving Arab solidarity.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Doctor—'Arafat in Excellent Health, Had Flu

NC1905122996 Paris AFP in English 1203 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, May 19 (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's personal doctor on Sunday [19 May] denied reports 'Arafat had suffered a mild stroke and said he was in "excellent health."

'Arafat, 67, has been hit by a simple "bout of flu and the effects of overwork," Doctor Ashraf al-Kurdi, a neurologist, told AFP in Amman after examining the head of the Palestinian Authority.

Israeli television quoted unnamed Israeli officials on Thursday as saying 'Arafat suffered a mild stroke in Cairo after the summit with King Husayn of Jordan and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

And the Egyptian weekly ROSE AL-YUSUF said on Sunday 'Arafat collapsed and fell unconscious after the joint press conference with Mubarak and King Husayn.

Quoting sources close to 'Arafat, the paper said he was rushed to a military hospital "under complete secrecy," where tests showed he suffered from "a drop in blood pressure and blood sugar as well as irregularities in circulation due to stress."

But al-Kurdi, a Palestinian Jordanian who has been 'Arafat's doctor since 1984, said he had examined 'Arafat in Cairo and that he was only suffering from "fatigue." He added that he had examined the Palestinian leader again on Thursday in Gaza City and that he "was in good condition and did not need any x-rays or examinations requiring laboratory analysis."

"I told him he could carry on with his activities as normal, although I warned him to take rests between his many activities because the pace of his life is infernal."

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Zahhar Urges Hamas Not To Carry Out Anti-Israeli Attacks

JN1705200296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Representing President Yasir 'Arafat at a conference held to show solidarity with Musa Abu-Marzuq, Sulayman al-Shurafa', the president's adviser, asserted that the Palestinian weapon cannot be brandished at Palestinians. He stressed the need to entrench Palestinian national unity. Al-Shurafa' pointed out that the National Authority did its utmost to obtain the release of Abu-Marzuq, who is detained by the U.S. police.

Mahmud al-Zahhar, who also participated in the conference at al- Yarmuk playground in Gaza, urged Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members not to carry out any military actions against the Israelis in the near future. He also emphasized the need to bolster Palestinian national unity.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas 'Leader' Opposes Attacks on Israel Before Elections

TA1805113196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader in Gaza has called on members of the fundamentalist group's military arm to refrain from attacks against Israel ahead of the May 29th elections. Addressing a rally in Gaza of the Islamic National Salvation Party, Mahmud al-Zahhar called on 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam not to take any steps in the days before the elections. He said this was to ensure the group is not interpreted as a tool serving the interests of one Zionist party or another, as he put it.

The Islamic National Salvation Party, a Hamas splinter group formed in March, backs peaceful means of opposing the Israel-PLO peace accords.

[Later on in the same newscast, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English notes that "in Gaza, some 3,000 Palestinians attended a rally in support of Hamas political leader Musa Abu-Marzuq, currently facing possible extradition to Israel from the United States. Speakers at the rally demanded that Abu-Marzuq be released immediately by the U.S. Israel wants to put Abu-Marzuq on trial for involvement in plans to carry out suicide attacks. Palestinian officials have warned of fresh violence if Abu-Marzuq is tried here."]

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Zahhar Explains Call to Hamas To Stop Operations

JN1805130096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] political leader, called on the 'Izz-al-Din al- Qassam Battalions to refrain from carrying out military operations during the present period that precedes elections in Israel.

We, at Radio Monte Carlo, asked Dr. al-Zahhar about the reasons which made him issue this appeal at this stage in particular. He said:

[Begin recording] [Al-Zahhar] First, it was a call for calm in the entire area. We asked Israel to release all detainees of both sexes, including Shaykh Ahmad Yasin. Then, we asked the United States not to hand over Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq to Israel as this means a new whirlpool of violence. We asked the Palestinian Authority to immediately initiate a dialogue after releasing detainees from Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. To complete the circle, we asked the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Battalions not to carry any operations at this stage so that they would not be interpreted as being in service of the Likud at the expense of the Labor Party. We consider Likud and Labor to be two sides of the same Israeli coin whose policies have harmed the entire Palestinian people. Thus, we are not a party to this game, and do not wish to tarnish the image of Hamas, an Islamic liberation movement, by having it join the whirlpool of Israeli elections.

[Unidentified correspondent] It is an established fact that operations against Israel at this time have a negative impact on candidate Shim'on Peres' chances. The suspension of operations, logically, serves Peres' chances of success. Do you implicitly support Peres against Netanyahu?

[Al-Zahhar] First, we know that the Palestinian people's tragedies began with the Labor Party. The Labor party established the state on our land, and they were the ones who launched most of the wars and occupied all of our land and other Arab territories. Therefore, we are not a party to this game, and we do not want to be part of this whirlpool, because, from a religious point of view we cannot give our loyalty either to Shim'on Peres or the Likud. Our objective is not to have our image tarnished in the process. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Zahhar Reiterates Call To Halt Military Operations

JN1805192696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 May 96

[Interview with Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a Gaza-based Hamas official, by Mahmud Abu-al-Hayja "this evening"; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-al-Hayja] In a clear stand yesterday, you urged al-Qassam battalions to halt their military operations against Israeli targets and stressed the need to promote Palestinian national unity. In its newscast this evening, Israeli television carried statements by Ibrahim Ghawshah, in which he said that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] will continue its military operations against Israel. We see a contradiction between your call and Ghawshah's. What do you think about this?

[Al-Zahhar] Our statement yesterday was a clear message to several sides. We aimed to create a climate that will ease the tension on the Palestinian scene. This message was also aimed at easing regional tension. We do not want Hamas to be involved in the Israeli election game, the outcome of which appears to be awaited by the entire world — as if this outcome will influence the policy of the whole world, including U.S., Western, and Arab policies.

We believe that it is unwise for Hamas to carry out any action that could be construed as involvement in Israeli domestic politics to help either Likud or Labor win the elections. The two major Israeli parties are two sides of the same coin. Both are responsible for our tragedies, for the loss of our land and property, and for the desecration of our holy shrines. Consequently, we will not lose anything if we keep our word in this regard. We cannot work to help a party win the elections. Our religion prevents us from doing so.

With regard to the conflicting statements, you are aware that I speak on behalf of Hamas in the territories and on behalf of the masses who attended yesterday's rally and responded favorably to my call. Consequently, I am not interested in explaining any contradiction in this regard. This matter is perfectly clear to everybody. I reflect the feelings and sentiments of the Palestinian people. In the same vein, I reflect Hamas' decision in the territories.

[Abu-al-Hayja] But why did Ghawshah react to your call so quickly?

[Al-Zahhar] You can ask this question to anyone who might have an answer to it, anyone you deem fit.

[Abu-al-Hayja] Can I conclude from this, Dr. al-Zahhar, that Hamas holds two views in this regard?

[Al-Zahhar] Hamas is a big movement. It has room for diverse views.

[Abu-al-Hayja] Does it hold two views: One in the territories, and another outside the territories?

[Al-Zahhar] It is clear that I reflect the sentiments of the people in the territories. The view of Hamas outside the territories has been expressed. It is my hope that Hamas leaders outside the territories will reconsider their calculations and familiarize themselves with the developments taking place in the Palestinian territories. I hope that they will properly determine what is best for Hamas and the homeland at this point in time. Contacts and consultations must be intensified so that we may form a unified position in the interest of the Palestinian people.

[Abu-al-Hayja] Thank you, Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar.

[Al-Zahhar] Thanks be to God.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leaflet Threatens More Attacks, Criticizes al Zahhar

TA1905182796 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 19 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] published a leaflet yesterday in which it threatened to continue terrorist attacks with no connection to the date of the Israeli elections.

Our correspondent Sulayman al-Shafi reports that the leaflet sharply criticized Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar's remarks yesterday in which he called for a halt to terrorist attacks until the elections are over.

Palestinian Affairs: Gaza Sources—Al-Zahhar Pressured by PA Influence

TA1905073196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, one of the leaders of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] political branch in the Gaza Strip, has called on Hamas leaders abroad to be sensitive to the situation of the residents of the territories and to bear the new circumstances in mind. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that, in an interview with Voice of Palestine, al-Zahhar called on the Hamas military arm to stop the attacks against Israelis and said his call reflected the sentiments and wishes of residents of the territories.

Palestinian Authority [PA] sources said the Hamas leadership abroad has adopted a radical line, toeing the

Iranian line, and is responsible for the latest attacks. Our correspondent notes, however, that according to Gaza sources, al-Zahhar's call was made under pressure from the PA, and that he has no influence whatsoever on the Hamas terrorist branches.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas' Al-Zahhar Calls For Dialogue With National Authority

JN1905195796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, spokesman for Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement, described as vituperations the statements issued yesterday by some Hamas wings, which cast doubts about his being a Hamas spokesman, after he urged members of Hamas military wing to stop military operations against Israel. He added: Let them say what they want. Dr. al-Zahhar called for resuming dialogue between the National Authority and Hamas Movement to formulate brotherly relations founded on firm and comprehensive bases.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman Says Attacks in Israel To Continue

NC1805115096 Paris AFP in English 1023 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, May 18 (AFP) - The spokesman in Jordan for the Palestinian militant group Hamas, Ibrahim Ghawshah, vowed here Saturday to pursue attacks against Israel, refuting earlier remarks by a Hamas official in the Gaza Strip urging the group to stop.

"The declaration from Mahmud al-Zahhar about halting attacks against Israel do not reflect the group's political line and he only represents himself, since he is not a Hamas spokesman," said Ghawshah, adding that he has been the group's "sole spokesman for the past six years."

Al-Zahhar, who described himself Friday as the Hamas "spokesman," urged the group's armed wing 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam not to carry out attacks against Israel before the Jewish state's elections on May 29.

But Ghawshah told AFP that al-Zahhar's declarations were "distorted and prodded by the Palestine Authority (PA)."

"The group's political line did not change and it is to pursue resistance against Zionist occupation," he added.

He said that "al-Zahhar ostensibly declared his intention not to affect the balloting, but in fact, his PA-driven declarations were meant to affect the outcome of the elections in favor of the Labor party and its candidate (Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on) Peres.

"As spokesman, I reiterate the group's strategy of continued struggle, and its military wing's operations are not linked to the Zionist polls," he said. "Nor is the movement concerned about who should win the elections — Labor or Likud — since they are two facets of one coin."

Peres has tightened the noose around the West Bank and Gaza Strip following a wave of suicide bombings earlier this year which left 62 people dead in Israel. Hamas claimed responsibility for most of the deadly attacks.

Meanwhile, Ghawshah said he was not in a position to identify whether a Palestinian arrested Friday by an Israeli patrol was a member of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam.

"As politicians we are not aware of the happenings in the military wing," he said.

Hasan Salamah had been sought by Israel as the mastermind behind three of the suicide bombings.

But Ghawshah said that the "arrest or martyrdom of Salamah would not halt the resistance or the floods of Jihad (holy war) seekers."

"Zionists should not rejoice, when they shoot or kill a Hamas member - as the case with (mastermind) Yahya 'Ayyash or 'Imad 'Aql, because Palestinians are capable of conceiving other heroes in the years to come who are ready to sacrifice their souls for the sake of their country."

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Official Denies Plan To Stop Attacks, Kill PA Figures

NC1805204496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 18 May 96

[Telephone interview with official Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah by 'Isam Hasan, on the "News and Reports" program; date and place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Mr. Ibrahim Ghawshah, you made statements to news agencies in which you refuted Mahmud al-Zahhar's claim that he is the spokesman of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Could you please shed some light on this?

[Al-Zahhar] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate, what happened, my brother, is this: A statement was issued in the name of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions yesterday saying that resistance and jihad operations [against Israel] can be halted in return for a dialogue with the Palestinian Authority [PA]. After this statement, brother Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar addressed a call to 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions urging them to stop their attacks until 29 May, so that Hamas may not be seen as favoring one or another of the two Israeli parties, Labor and Likud.

Hamas issued a statement today, and I, as the official spokesman of the group at home and abroad, explained the situation. We said that yesterday's statement was a phony one, fabricated by the PA to confuse Hamas's base and supporters everywhere. Dr. al-Zahhar's statement and explanation were untrue and inaccurate. It is unacceptable, and not customary, to give instructions and address calls to the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions — which is an independent military wing — through the media. Al-Zahhar's offer to stop operations until the Israeli elections are held is, in itself, a clear bias toward the Labor Party and its leader, Peres. This is exactly the position of the PA, which considers itself and the Labor Party in the same boat.

Hamas said in its statement today — and I, as the official spokesman of the movement, announced — that what al-Zahhar said reflects his personal opinion and not that of Hamas, and that everyone should adhere to the movement's policies and strategies.

This has already decided — especially at the Khartoum and Cairo meetings in late 1995, which al-Zahhar himself attended. The overwhelming majority [of Hamas leaders] in the West Bank, Gaza, and the diaspora decided to continue the resistance and reject the pressure applied by the Zionist entity, through the PA, to stop the resistance.

Therefore, the statement of my brother Dr. al-Zahhar is a departure from the policies of Hamas.

As regards other subjects, such as the National Salvation Party [NSP] — and al-Zahhar spoke yesterday at a rally held [by that party] in al-Yarmuk stadium — Hamas has explained that the NSP does not represent it, and that Hamas has nothing to do with the NSP. The NSP was licensed and financed by the PA. Its programs and proposals, therefore, do not depart from the wishes of the PA and its obligations under the Oslo agreement.

[Hasan] Certain political observers linked your statement concerning brother al-Zahhar with a statement made by [Palestine National Council Speaker] Salim al-Za'nun to the London-based AL- HAYAH newspaper. Al-Za'nun claimed there are differences among Hamas leaders inside and outside Palestinian territories regarding anti-Israel attacks. What is your comment?

[Ghawshah] Hamas is a unified movement. It makes its decisions through shura [consultation]. The overwhelming majority of the group members support the resistance programs. Those in the movement who have other opinions have one of two choices: to abide by the movement's decision even if they disagree with it or to leave the movement, as 'Imad al-Faluji did. But for someone to stay with the movement and claim that his personal views or the views of certain people around him represent the movement, and for him to take a position in harmony with that of the PA, is unacceptable by any rational person and by the Islamic movement in Palestine.

The program of resisting the occupation has been valid in Palestine for more than 80 years. No one can stop it; it will stop only when the occupation ends and the Palestinian people return to their sacred land, no matter how long this takes.

[Hasan] Salim al-Za'nun said Hamas and the Islamic Jihad issued a fatwa [religious ruling] allowing the killing of Palestinian officials because these officials — the two movements said — are no less ferocious in their fight against them than the Israelis. What do you say to this?

[Ghawshah] These statements are nothing new. Similar charges were made by the head of the PA. During a visit to Nabulus, 'Arafat, the head of the PA, raised a piece of paper saying this was a fatwa he managed to obtain on assassinations in Gaza. He said the same thing in front of the self-rule council [the Palestinian Legislative Council]. Therefore, Al-Za'nun's remark is not new. However, we in Hamas, and the brothers in Islamic Jihad, explained that the Zionist enemy is the common — and only — enemy, and that the Palestinian movement in Palestine will not be dragged from its resistance of the Zionist occupation into an inter-Palestinian clash. What has made al-Za'nun and others make such statements now is the fact that the PA is now going through a difficult period. The Palestinian people are growing angrier, more indignant, and more tense over the PA's oppressive practices, confiscation of freedoms, and raids against universities, and the spread of corruption among the members of the PA. Moreover, there are reports of the torture of more than 1,500 Islamists in PA prisons. Al-Za'nun and others are trying to divert attention from this situation and this anger on the part of the population by accusing Hamas of planning assassinations of PA officials.

The fact is that the Islamists are the target of oppression. So far, the Islamists have not harmed any PA official.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Arrests Suicide Bombings Suspect in Hebron

JN1805100396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces of occupation last night arrested citizen Hasan Salamah after opening fire on him and wounding him.

Israeli radio accused citizen Salamah, who was attacked in Hebron last night, of planning several suicide operations against Israeli targets.

The occupation forces stormed the house of citizen Rizq 'Abdallah Rujub at dawn this morning on charges of transporting Salamah in his private vehicle. The occupation forces arrested Rujub, his brother Hasan, and his nephew 'Awdah Misbah.

According to reports from Hebron, Salamah underwent surgery in the 'Alyah Hospital in Hebron last night and is in a very critical condition.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Issues Leaflet on Talks With PA

TA1705164596 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1602 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] military branch 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, issued a leaflet today a "genuine initiative to organize the exchanged relationship between Hamas and the PA [Palestinian Authority], to coordinate all its national meanings, and to organize the papers of the Palestinian house according to strong basis of appreciation and respect." The leaflet explained that this is an outcome of the deteriorating internal Palestinian situation and "the intensification of hatred feelings for the majority of the Palestinian people due to the continuous savage practices of the Authority's security apparatuses."

The leaflet named the by-lines [as received] and general references for such a relationship:

First, ending all media propaganda and rumors campaigns by both parties, and to refrain from any matter that hurts the joint relationship between the two parties.

Second, to clear the Palestinian atmosphere which is filled with hatred, and to prepare for a truthful commencement of reconciliation rounds by ending the oppressive measures and the release of prisoners.

Third, to be liberated from the siege of narrow views and limited horizons in dealing with Hamas, the matter which characterized, and still characterizes, the behavior and practices of the Authority in the previous period. A permanent and clear strategy should be taken where both sides are committed to in order to put an end to the state of offense, and strengthening the concepts of brotherhood, cooperation, and respect in the hears of all. [sentence as received]

Fourth, terminating all devious voices and directions interested in escalating the positions and hoping for a war and fighting to terminate the joint national factors; thus increasing the fires of enmity against the Islamic Movement members.

Fifth, Hamas and al-Qassam Brigade vow to cooperate and positively deal with any serious political initiative symmetric with our people's interest and aspirations. This should also correlate with the national issues and aims, which are rescuing the Palestinian people, with its various factions, from the hell of mutiny and collision disasters.

Sixth, the Authority vows to abolish oppression and set justice, respect of democracy, and guarantee of freedom of expression by giving the opportunity to those skilled to participate in building the homeland and contribute to the reform and construction process.

Seventh, to create a neutral national committee with the approval of both sides to take the responsibility of supervising the procedures of dialogue and mediation. This committee should adopt an appropriate role related to this matter and to certify any results that the two teams might reach.

Eighth, preparedness of both sides to dialogue calmly and to utilize all efforts to avoid the negatives of dispute and division of our Palestinian people.

Ninth, to isolate this genuine initiative from any military manifestations or side accidents that might be found later or might take place in the future such as revenge for the Qana massacre or what have you. For this initiative should remain in a safe stronghold from any possible influences that might be carried with the winds of the coming days.

[Signed] 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

[Dated] Friday, 17 April 1996

Palestinian Affairs: PA Reportedly in Contact With Iranian Opposition Groups

JN2005113496 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 20 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD learned that security elements in the Palestinian Authority [PA] recently initiated contacts with Iranian groups opposed to the current regime in Iran. These opposition groups are based in some Arab and foreign countries.

Reliable PA sources told AL-MAJD that these contacts, held at the official instructions of Yasir 'Arafat and with the prior approval of Shim'on Peres, are aimed at reaching an agreement with the Iranian opposition factions on possible financial aid, arms, and training for these factions from the PA.

The sources asserted that 'Arafat expressed his readiness to receive the Iranian opposition leaders in Gaza, open offices and training bases for them, and arm their members in various self-rule areas.

These reliable sources, who still have a national conscience, added that 'Arafat is trying to send a message to the Iranian regime, which 'Arafat accuses of supporting Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad, both of which oppose the Oslo agreement and its appendixes.

These sources told AL-MAJD they believe 'Arafat is acting on behalf of Israel in this scheme because it might be difficult for the Iranian opposition to deal directly with Israel. The Iranian opposition does not find it very embarrassing to deal with a Palestinian Muslim side, even if it is revolving in Israel's orbit.

The reliable and respected sources said that, not only is 'Arafat trying to create additional problems for the Iranian regime, he is also trying to appease Washington and draw its attention to the important role he can play as part of the U.S. scheme to surround and fight Iran, in accordance with the Sharm al-Shaykh summit resolutions.

The sources pointed out that the efforts to clear the way for dialogue and collusion between 'Arafat's organization and Iranian opposition factions, if they succeed, could expand the Palestinian contacts to include other Arab and Islamic opposition factions in accordance with whatever Washington and Tel Aviv deem appropriate.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas 'Categorically' Denies Ad on Jerusalem

TA2005110696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0400 GMT 20 May 96

[Report on interview with PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, by chief political correspondent Udi Segal; 'Abbas' remarks in English; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Segal] According to a Likud election ad aired yesterday, 'Arafat said that Peres would do more than divide Jerusalem — that he would sell all of it to the Palestinians. In reaction, we received a very strong statement from Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], the Palestinian Authority's [PA] No. 2, against Binyamin Netanyahu. It may have been the strongest attack by any PA official since this election campaign started. Reacting to the Likud statement alleging a secret Peres-'Arafat agreement on the partition of Jerusalem, Abu-Mazin said in an interview with IDF Radio that the Likud chairman was not telling the truth. Here are his remarks:

[Abu-Mazin] There are not any secret agreements between the PA and the Israeli Government concerning anything, especially Jerusalem. All the agreements have been published for the public, and we have no secrets at all.

[Segal translates and continues] [passage omitted] We asked Abu-Mazin, the alleged party to the secret Peres-'Arafat agreement, about the Likud ad, which posed three questions to Mr. Peres: What was the Jerusalem agreement mentioned by 'Arafat? Why are you hiding the agreement from the public? Why are you willing to partition Jerusalem? Abu-Mazin said he watches the election ads every night, and he denied the Likud allegations very categorically.

[Abu-Mazin] No, no, no. There is no promise, there are no letters, there is nothing concerning this subject. We didn't receive any promises, there are no agreements between us and Mr. Shim'on Peres concerning Jerusalem. I think it is a propaganda, not more. It is a propaganda for the elections. We say that Jerusalem, as one of the final status issues, will be on the table after nowadays, but nothing else.

[Segal translates and continues] I asked him why Israelis should take his word. They can say that Abu-Mazin may be saying these things to help Shim'on Peres get reelected. Here is his response:

[Abu-Mazin] They will realize sooner or later that I'm saying the truth and I'm not working for Mr. Peres or for anybody else. I am not working to this candidate's succeed or that fail. No, we do not interfere in the internal affairs of the Israeli people. We say the truth: Nothing between us and Mr. Shim'on Peres concerning Jerusalem, no secret agreements at all.

[Segal translates and continues] At the end of the interview, Abu-Mazin sharply attacks the Likud chairman, saying: He is simply not telling the truth.

[Abu-Mazin] I can say that he didn't say the truth. I cannot say such a word as lying or something like that, but I am sure that he didn't say the truth.

Palestinian Affairs: Syrian Camp Residents Denounce Abu-Marzuq Extradition

JN1805171896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus—Representatives of the Palestinian camps in Syria denounced the decision by a U.S. judge on 8 May to extradite Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, head of the Political Bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, who is being held in a U.S. jail, to the Israeli occupation authorities.

In a statement issued in Damascus today at the conclusion of their popular conference at al-Yarmuk Camp, the representatives warned of the danger of this unlawful and immoral decision, which is biased in favor of Israel and which lacks all legal and humanitarian justification.

The statement urges the U.S. Administration to release Dr. Abu- Marzuq immediately, especially extraditing him to Israel's interrogation and torture cells will threaten his life.

Palestinian Affairs: New Cabinet Meets; Ministers Sworn In

JN1805065096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The new cabinet members took the constitutional oath before President Yasir 'Arafat at the beginning of the weekly cabinet meeting in the Education Ministry headquarters in Ramallah yesterday evening.

The cabinet members discussed the new government's policy statement that will be submitted to the Legislative Council at its next session for a vote of confidence. The policy statement systematically and accurately defines the tasks of the coming stage and enumerates the achievements scored over the past two years, as well as the obstacles hindering other achievements.

The cabinet also discussed the results of the Cairo tripartite summit his excellency the president held with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Jordan's King Husayn. The cabinet reviewed the latest political developments, particularly the redeployment in Hebron and the Israeli occupation forces' intention to confiscate land in the Bethlehem Governorate.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian Envoy Urges al-Qadhdhafi To Stop Deportations

JN1905100796 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 19 May 96 p 25

[Report by Kamal Zakarinah]

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Umar al-Khatib, ambassador of the state of Palestine and representative of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] in Amman, described as repressive Israel's total closure of the Palestinian territories and setting up of military roadblocks separating Palestinian cities. He said that the Palestinians are experiencing tough economic conditions, given the rise in unemployment rates and the soaring prices of basic commodities. He said that the PNA is facing difficulties in importing these commodities due to the frequent Israeli closures.

In an exclusive statement to AL-DUSTUR, al-Khatib said that these Israeli measures violate the agreements signed by the Palestinian and Israeli sides. He added that these closures are unjustified, noting that Israel always resorts to security pretexts to impose a comprehensive and tight siege on the Palestinian territories. He said that the PNA proved its capability to maintain security and stability in the areas under its control. He explained that the February bombings took place inside Israel, and that these bombings are the responsibility of the Israeli security and not that of the PNA.

Concerning Libya's deportation of Palestinians living in Libya, the Palestinian ambassador said: We are suffering from the Israeli measures as well as the prevention of the Palestinian police forces and PLO cadres from entering the homeland. At such a time, however, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi deports Palestinians working in Libya, claiming that this measure will help them return to their homeland and national authority — something which is impossible.

He went on to say: So far, we have not secured the return to the homeland of the basic cadres and Palestinian troops that are still stationed in some Arab countries.

The Palestinian ambassador called on Colonel al-Qadhdhafi not to deprive the Palestinians working in Libya of their means of livlihood, especially since they support their families in Palestine, where they encounter difficult economic conditions. He urged al-Qadhdhafi to wait until a real and comprehensive return is made possible to the Palestinian people — an issue that will be debated in the final-status negotiations.

Algeria

Algeria: Commerce Minister—Algeria To Join WTO by End of Year

LD1805230496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Commerce Minister Abdelkrim Harchaoui, today announced that it was decided that Algeria will join the World Trade Organization [WTO] before the end of the current year, 1996.

He stressed, during a day of studies on trade, dedicated to the evaluation of the program of the ministry, that the commitment of the private sector to the project, in the discussions with the organization mentioned above, is due to be concluded soon, in preparation for Algeria to join at the fixed dates.

He said that the promotion of foreign trade, its organization, and its control aim to encourage exporting enterprises as well as to take part in exporting goods besides hydrocarbons before the horizon of the year 2000.

Algeria: Armed Islamists Shot by Security Forces

LD1905153496 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, three or four suspected Islamists were shot dead by the security forces in Algiers on 18 May during an assault on an apartment where the armed group had holed up.

Egypt

Egypt: Al-Baz Denies Egyptian-U.S. Disagreement

NC1805055296 Cairo MENA in English 2218 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 17 May (MENA)—Egypt has no disagreement with America, announces a banner splashed across the front page by tomorrow's AKHBAR AL-YAWM, a Cairo Arabic language weekly newspaper, quoting Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first foreign under secretary doubling as presidential political affairs office chief.

Dr. al-Baz, while conferring with members of the Egyptian community in the American capital Washington, was rather speaking of different attitudes and alluding to the United States as a friendly country with which Egypt is cooperating in various domains. The top ranking official's statements, which are played up as the newspapers's main front page news story, see as natural the point that America should have a point of view different than that of Egypt over some issues.

The relations between Egypt and America are not relations between a party that receives and another that grants. We are rather cooperating together diplomatically, politically, economically, militarily and culturally, maintains Dr. al-Baz. He regards American economic aid as mutually beneficial, thus rendering relations as fruitful to both parties and continuation of cooperation as vital to each of them.

Dr. al-Baz, with respect to the Middle East peace process, is expecting the resumption of negotiations between Israel and Syria while reporting Turkey as having briefed Egypt on the nature of its military cooperation with Israel.

Turkey asserted that no Israeli-Turkish alliance would be established against the Arab countries, Dr. al-Baz said.

Egypt: Al-Baz Discusses Security Concerns

NC1905101096 Cairo MENA in English 2211 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, May 18 (MENA)—The American officials are reported here as having been briefed on the Egyptian concern about security agreements signed by some non-Arab countries in the region, thus evoking fears lest these deals should be orientated against some Arab countries.

Egypt does not, according to Dr, Usamah al-Baz, first foreign undersecretary doubling as presidential political affairs office chief, who is quoted exclusively by tomorrow's AL-AHRAM, a Cairo Arabic language daily, want to revive the alliances era in the region particularly in view of the fact that Egypt had had its own experience with respect to orientations like the Baghdad and central pacts (of the fifties and sixties).

Al-Baz, speaking at the end of a four-day visit to the United States, alluded to that actual track of multilateral negotiations where all issue are discussed, with Egypt accordingly unwanting to see countries pursuing positions separate from that track, which takes up the issues of security and disarmament.

Egypt, says al-Baz, is worrying about such deals since they emerge suddenly at an unsuitable time without knowledge of their content and range.

Turkey, al-Baz goes on to say, has explained to us that its recent agreement with Israel is confined to a limited framework.

"However, we have briefed the American side on the causes of our concern in general," says al-Baz indicating that his visit to Washington was a good opportunity to have consultations and an exchange of information and opinion on the Middle East peace process and how to ensure its proper drive in the coming phase.

It was of interest to al-Baz to know the American line of thinking about the peace process after the Israeli elections and the containment of the situation on the heels of events in Lebanon, while expounding the Egyptian view and thinking about those issues.

He said he discussed with U.S. officials some ideas concerning the remaining peace process tracks, final phase negotiations between Palestinians and Israel and the drive on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks with Israel.

Arab reconciliation, Egyptian naval exercises and American accusations of Libya make tomorrow's editorial themes.

Egypt: Al-Baz Conveys Concerns About Security to U.S. Officials

NC1905093196 Cairo MENA in English
0615 GMT 19 May 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 19 May (MENA)—[passage indistinct] All regional issues, such as the questions of security and disarmament can be discussed during the Middle East multilaterals, [First Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Usamah] al-Baz said. That is why countries should not take stances that deviate from the course of the multilateral talks, he said.

What worries Egypt is that some security agreements emerge suddenly and at an inappropriate time without their contents and extents being known, he said.

According to AL-AHRAM, President Mubarak's aide said that Turkey did explain to Egypt that its recent military cooperation agreement with Israel is confined to a limited framework. But Egypt is worried and the reasons of its worries have already been expressed to the U.S. Adminsitration, he added.

The daily quoted al-Baz as saying that his four-day visit to Washington, which ended yesterday, was a good opportunity to have consultations with U.S. officials on the Middle East peace process and how to ensure its proper drive in the coming phase.

It was of interest to Egypt to know the American line of thinking about the peace process after the end of the Israeli elections.

He said he discusssed with the Americans some ideas pertaining to the peace march, the final stage of peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel and the drive on the Syrian and Lebanese peace tracks. Al-Baz expects the Syrian-Israeli peace talks to resume after the end of the Israeli elections late this month.

Egypt: Envoy in Israel Interviewed on Peace Process

NC2005063496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0525 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 May (MENA)—Egypt's Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni has stated that Egypt does not interfere in any country's internal affairs; it is following the Israeli elections because of their effect on the peace process in the region.

Evaluating the Arab-Israeli peace process, he told today's AL- AHRAM that Palestine is the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that without a just solution to this cause there will be no peace in the region.

Ambassador Basyuni pointed out that the position of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks on the peace map is very important for finalizing the peace march between Israel and its Arab neighbors. This is why we need to reach a peaceful solution with Syria and Lebanon based on the principle of land for peace. Without realizing this principle there will be no peace with Syria and Lebanon.

He said Syria cannot sign a peace agreement until it retrieves all the Golan Heights, adding that President Hafiz al-Asad will accept nothing less than the equivalent of what Egypt got, that is, it must get the return of the Golan Heights in full.

Egypt: Musa Welcomes Yemen-Eritrea Arbitration Accord

NC2005112696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1040 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has restated that the signing of the arbitration accord between Eritrea and Yemen in Paris is an important opportunity to establish stability and a peaceful solution to the conflict between the two countries in line with international arbitration.

In a statement before leaving for Paris today to take part in the signing ceremony for the accord on the conflict between Eritrea and Yemen over Hanish, Musa said the signing is the fruit of several political exchanges. The foreign minister noted that the French role in reaching arbitration was central and important, one that enjoyed the support of Egypt. He added that the French role was acceptable to both Yemen and Eritrea.

In his remarks Musa emphasized Egypt's interest in Red Sea security. He added that security and peace are inseparable, whether in the north or south of the Red Sea. This requires us to look at things from various angles—those of security in general in the Red Sea region as well as Arab security and African security—he added. The Arab and African security issues are not conflicting issues, but are, rather, integral parts, Musa said.

The foreign minister expressed Egypt's hope that the signing of the accord will pave the way for solving the problem and achieving an agreement between the two sides. He pointed out that he will hold several contacts with the Yemeni and Eritrean sides as well as with the French side to steer things in this direction.

Asked whether arbitration between Eritrea and Yemen and the successful experiment between Egypt and Israel over Taba would create new options for solving the African problems and conflicts, 'Amr Musa said: Certainly. Peaceful solutions are always required for solving conflicts.

Egypt: Trade Federation Denies Israeli Report on Joint Meetings

NC1705183296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1635 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 May (MENA)—An official source at the General Federation of the Chambers of Commerce [GFCC] has denied a report carried today by Israeli radio that a joint Egyptian-Israeli chamber of commerce began meetings in Tel Aviv last night.

The source stressed that the GFCC will not participate in or agree to establish any joint commercial or economic body with Israel before a just and comprehensive peace is established in the region and before Israel ends its terrorist practices.

In a statement to MENA, GFCC Chairman Mahmud al-'Arabi explained that the GFCC had received an invitation from the Israeli Embassy in Cairo to establish a so-called Egyptian-Israeli chamber of commerce and industry. He added: When we asked the Egyptian Industries Federation about this, the federation stressed that it too would not sign or even give an opinion on the establishment of such a joint chamber.

He said the GFCC sent letters to Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and to Dr. 'Adil Khalil, head of the Trade Representation Office, asking that they instruct the Egyptian ambassador to Israel and the Egyptian commercial attache in the embassy to investigate this matter and identify the Egyptians who attended the meeting so that appropriate measures can be taken.

The GFCC warned every Egyptian or non-Egyptian not to act on behalf of the GFCC or establish any bodies with Israeli chambers.

It also warned Israeli chambers against using the GFCC's name in any joint body with the Israeli chambers at present.

Egypt: Airport Authorities Seize 'Radioactive Radium Fluid'

NC1705162696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1520 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 May (MENA)—The Cairo airport authorities today impounded 20 bottles of radioactive radium fluid carried by an Egyptian technician, upon his arrival from the United States.

Intelligence service men were tipped off that the technician would arrive in Cairo on board a German airliner. The intelligence men found the bottles filled with the fluid in the passenger's suitcases. The Egyptian technician said that he brought the bottles from the United States and that he would use the fluid for gold plating purposes. The bottles were seized and are being kept at the airport's customs house. The competent authorities have been notified.

Egypt: Paper Terms UN Report on Qana 'Justified,' 'Courageous'

NC1705153296 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 17 May 96

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "To What Extent Can the United Nations Stand Up to Israel?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It goes without saying that the Israeli aggression against Qana in Lebanon severely harmed Israel's relations with the moderate Arab states. The aggression further complicated the situation in the region and added to the obstacles in the way of the peace process. UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali's report, which directly blamed Israel for the killing of more than 100 Lebanese civilians, is justified. As Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said on Wednesday [15 May], the report through which Dr. Butrus-Ghali confronted Israel and the United States is extremely important. Musa said the UN chief is duty bound to present the report to the UN Security Council so that it can be discussed and acted upon. The publication of the report, which holds Israel directly responsible for the Qana massacre, proves that Dr. Butrus-Ghali respects his duties as a UN secretary general. The publication of the UN military committee's report on Israel's responsibility for the Qana massacre showed a courageous stance by Dr. Butrus-Ghali, a stance respected by people who reject the threats of the forces that dominate and control the world stage.

The United Nations, through its secretary general, was not the only party that strongly condemned the massacre perpetrated by the Israelis in Qana. Elite Israeli thinkers, including Ari'eh Shavit in HA'ARETZ, strongly condemned Israel's inhuman action against Lebanese civilians. Thomas Friedman, a political writer in THE NEW YORK TIMES, also condemned the Israeli aggression in Lebanon and cited Shavit, saying that Israel killed innocent Lebanese because, while it counts the lives of Israelis as sacred, it attributes little importance to the lives of others.

Perhaps this explains Israel's claims that it has the upper hand in the region. Israel has been engaged in collective revenge. The blockade it imposed on the Palestinians following the operations carried out by Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement], and the massacres it perpetrated against the people of Lebanon are fresh in our memory. All this, of course, severely hurts Israel's relations with the moderate Arab countries seeking to establish peace in the region. It places more obstacles in the way of the peace efforts, and shatters the limited confidence built up over the years between Israel and the Arab countries.

Israel is expected to escalate its campaign against the United Nations because of this report. It will perhaps go as far as to call for reconsidering the mission of the UN forces in Lebanon when the time comes for the renewal of this mission in July. If Israel really does this, its goal will be to record its position toward the United Nations and to keep the occupied part of southern Lebanon as an arena open to Israel's military practices. What strengthens this belief is Israel's previous attempts to restrict the freedom of the international forces and prevent them from obstructing its attacks on Lebanon.

The most pressing question now is: To what extent can the United Nations stand up to Israel, which in the past succeeded in hindering the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 and failed to withdraw from southern Lebanon?

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Receives Arab League Secretary

LD1905122196 Tripoli JANA in English
0832 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, 19 May (JANA) — The leader of the revolution received Dr. Esmat Abdel Magid, the secretary of the League of Arab States, who is at present visiting the Great Jamahiriyah.

Present at the meeting were Ahmed Adel, the assistant secretary general of the League of Arab States, and the secretary of the General People's Committee for Unity.

Libya: Arab League Chief Said Mediating for Palestinian Deportees

NC1905133296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1150 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 May (MENA)—Responsible Palestinian sources have expressed their fear that Libya may deport the approximately 17,000 members of the Palestinian community residing in Libya. The six-month deadline that Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi set as a result of a mediation effort by Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid before deporting the Palestinian community ended last week. Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid began a visit to Libya Friday [17 May] to discuss with the Libyan leader several Arab issues, including the deportation of Palestinians.

These sources expressed hope that Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid's endeavors with the Libyan leader will succeed and that the Libyan authorities will take into consideration the current stage the Palestinian issue is passing through, particularly since the final-status negotiations that have begun are the most difficult of the negotiation stages and involve the status of Jerusalem, the return of the Palestinian refugees, and the Israeli settlements.

According to press reports, a camp for Palestinian deportees was set up in August at the city of Musa'id on the Libyan-Egyptian borders. The camp houses 160 Palestinian residents of Libya, mostly women and children, who live in extremely poor hygienic conditions as a result of lack of food and potable water. Several diseases have spread among these deportees. The Palestinian deportees in the al-'Awdah camp on the Libyan-Egyptian borders live in similar hygienic conditions. Skin diseases are rife in the camp, particularly among women and children, due to lack of clean water and reasonable medical services. The deportees use water transported by water tanks coming along the international highway between the Egyptian city of al-Sallum and the Libyan city of Musa'id, in addition to water provided by the Libyan authorities. This water is not healthy because of long periods of storage.

It is worth noting that a Libyan official at the Musa'id border point stated that 70 percent of the Palestinian residents in Libya bear Libyan citizenship in accordance with a motto brother Colonel al-Qadhdhafi raised in 1986 stating that Libya is the land of all Arabs.

Libya: Arab League Head Denounces U.S. Threats Against Libya

LD1905135496 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0730 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Benghazi, 19 May — Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Arab League secretary general, gave a statement to the Libyan news agency in which he expressed his happiness and delight to be received by the brother leader of the revolution. He affirmed that the Arab League supported the Libyan Arab position towards the so-called Lockerbie issue. He said this just position was in conformity with the stipulations of international law and the principles in force in the relations between countries.

The Arab League secretary general renewed the league's categorical rejection of the aggressive American threats against the Great Jamahiriyah, pointing out that these threats were considered a violation of the UN Charter. [passage omitted]

Libya: PRC President Sends Message to al-Qadhdhafi

LD1705191596 Tripoli JANA in English 1737 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al-Maa [May] 17, (JANA) — The President of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zemin, crossed the Libyan Arab airspace today on his way from Egypt to a number of African countries defying the forces of the spiteful Western tyrannical crusade being led by America and rediculing the arbitrary resolution imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah through the so-called Security Council.

On the occasion of crossing the Libyan Arab national airspace, the Chinese president sent a message to the leader of the revolution stressing the deeply rooted and distinguished relations between the two friendly countries.

The Chinese president said in his message to the leader [passage indistinct] I would like to wish you good health and happiness and to the Libyan people progress and prosperity, and I would like to thank the Great Jamahiriyah [words indistinct] giving me permission to cross the Libyan Arab national airspace which shows the deeply rooted relationship between the two countries. I would like to wish you further progress and prosperity.

Tunisia

Tunisia: Opposition Deputy Chammari Arrested 18 May

LD1805144796 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Tunisia, opposition figure Khemais Chammari was arrested this morning. For seven months Chammari, deputy from the Movement of Socialist Democrats [MDS], has been the object of a judicial inquiry for breach of the secrecy of proceedings in the Moada case. MDS leader Mohamed Moada was, as you know, sentenced to 11 years imprisonment for undermining state security, plus one year for illegal currency dealing. Mohamed Moada's lawyer also happens to be Khemais Chammari's wife; she, too, is being prosecuted for breach of the secrecy of legal proceedings.

Tunisia: Human Rights Official Condemns Arrests

LD1905212896 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There have been protests following the arrest of the Tunisian member of the opposition, Khemais Chammari. The FIDH [International Federation of Human Rights] has called for the release of the deputy of the MDS [Movement of Socialist Democrats]. He has also received the support of the Center of International Studies and Solidarity Initiatives and of the Moroccan Human Rights Organization [OMDH].

OMDH President Abdelaziz Benanni spoke to Mouna el Banna:

[Begin Benanni recording] We are outraged. We were optimistic with the release of Mr. Faraj Fneish, the director of the Arab Institute of Human Rights. We have now heard that Khemais Chammari, a deputy and a leader of an opposition party, the MDS, as well as a human rights activist, has been arrested. He will probably have the same fate as Mr. Moada, who was judged at a trial which was totally unfair. Unfortunately, the human rights situation in Tunisia is now extremely worrying for us, it is of great concern. That is a regime which no longer tolerates any opposition and where there is unfortunately no civilian society, where there are no free associations. We know very well that it is difficult to react [as heard] in Tunisia these days. [end recording]

Western Sahara

Western Sahara: President—Resumption of Armed Struggle May Be Imminent

LD1805223496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a letter sent to world leaders and to the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, Saharan President Mohamed Abdelaziz mentioned the possibility of an imminent resumption of the armed struggle. Abdelaziz said in his letter that the prospect of the UN mission abandoning its commitment to organize a referendum on self-determination in the Western Sahara, in addition to the Moroccan provocations, made the resumption of the armed struggle an imminent possibility.

Western Sahara: Envoy Comments on UN Security Council's Draft Resolution

LD1705164896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the publication of the draft resolution on Western Sahara by the UN Security Council, the ambassador of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic to Algeria gave a statement to national radio in which he pointed out that the Security Council's draft resolution regarding Western Sahara was in line with the content of the report presented to it by the UN secretary general on 15 May. This is the report about which the Polisario Front expressed extreme reservations through the letter that Mohamed Abdelaziz, president of the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic and secretary general of the Polisario Front, sent to Qin Husain, the current chairman of the Security Council.

Bebe Youcif, the Saharan ambassador to Algeria, said that the Security Council's draft resolution distinguished between and separated aspects of the peace plan, while the UN-African peace plan was a complete whole and there was no possibility of jumping over any of its aspects.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Minister—Islamic Law To Be Applied to Anti-U.S. Bombers

LD1905230096 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2029 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Al-Kharj, 19 May (SPA) — His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector-general, expressed thanks to God Almighty for the blessings of security and stability bestowed upon the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia until it reached the state it is in now.

Replying to a question at a news conference held today regarding his highness's speech delivered after presiding over the ceremony of the board of the General Organization for Military Industry, his highness said: "First, thanks to God Almighty for the blessings of security and stability bestowed upon this country until we reached the state we are in now." [passage omitted]

In reply to a question on the reason for the delay in the demarcation of the border between the kingdom and Yemen, and whether the delay was caused by the Yemeni or Saudi side, his highness the second deputy prime minister said: "I would like to stress that no delay has been caused by our brothers in Yemen and no hindrance has been caused by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." [passage omitted]

On the kingdom's views regarding the peace process and the Israeli elections in the light of a number of pointers whether in sermons or in the Saudi press, his highness said: "First the sermon of the honorable Shaykh Salih Bin-Hamid and the Saudi press did not speak out of a vacuum, on the contrary they spoke out of a belief. Peace cannot be attained by force nor by Israeli haughtiness which are meaningless."

He further said: "We are all in pain for what had happened to our brothers in Lebanon, for the Israeli military strikes which are meaningless.

"We do not approve of this at all. We do not approve of attacks from both sides, but that does not mean a great power can dominate defenseless people. This is unacceptable, especially the strike on Qana was near a UN base."

Prince Sultan said peace could only come through good intentions. He said: "We wish to God Almighty that good intentions existed from both sides. Everybody in the Arab world wants peace because its homeland has been taken away from it. Israel wants peace because it is on other people's land. There is great difference between the one who sits on lands and wants peace and the one who wants his occupied lands and wants peace. Therefore, we should differentiate between the two.

Prince Sultan added: "As for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's stance as a state, it has always supported and will forever support the Palestine cause, the return of the Arab nation's usurped right, the UN Charter and the UN resolutions passed specifically on this issue.

His highness stressed that the kingdom was not concerned about internal matters in Israel or about whether Peres or someone else won the elections, but it was concerned that Israel should be moving towards real peace and implementing UN resolutions.

His highness was asked about reports by some foreign media saying that following the [British] high court ruling to allow Muhammad al-Mas'ari to remain [in the United Kingdom] might affect contracts signed between the Saudi and British defense ministries, he replied: "I have never heard of anyone called Muhammad al-Mas'ari. This is the first time I have heard his name."

Regarding U.S. State Department reports on warnings to U.S. citizens in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received by the U.S. embassy in Riyadh, which concerned threats related to the arrest of the perpetrators of the Riyadh explosion in Jumada al-Akhirah last year, his highness said: "These are childish acts. They think that they can influence the kingdom by telephone threats and leaflets. No. We will carry out the judgement of God Almighty against those criminals, and we will not hesitate in any way to apply the Islamic shari'ah against them." [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Trade Minister Discusses Kingdom Joining WTO

LD1905192996 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1750 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 19 May — Trade Minister Usamah Bin Ja'far Faqih today received Dr. Mario Scialoja, the ambassador from Italy—which is heading the current session of the EU—along with the ambassadors of Spain and Ireland.

The issue of the kingdom joining the World Trade Organization [WTO] was discussed during the meeting, along with an evaluation of the first round of talks, which was held recently in the organization headquarters in Geneva. [passage omitted]

Views were also exchanged about economic and trade relations between the kingdom and the EU. Faqih explained that the kingdom gives great importance to the development of economic and trade relations with its trade partners and to the increasing of joint projects for the relative budget and the basic equipment available to the development sectors.

Saudi Arabia: Interior Ministry Warns Pilgrims Not To Linger

LD1705131796 Riyadh SPA in English 1245 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, May 17, SPA — The Ministry of Interior has called all pilgrims who performed haj or umrah rituals to leave the country for home and warned that overstayers will be punished and subject to jailing, penalty and deportation for violating the regulations.

The ministry, in a statement, also warned citizens and non-Saudi residents of the kingdom from housing, employing or hiding people who came for haj, umrah or visit purposes when their entry visa expires. The statement said severe punishment will be also inflicted on those who facilitate residence or work for overstayers.

United Arab Emirates

UAE: President Receives PRC Vice Premier Wu Bangguo

JN1905161696 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1055 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu Dhabi, 19 May (WAKH) — His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], received PRC Vice Premier Wu Bangguo in Abu Dhabi today.

The PRC vice premier praised his highness's eagerness and interest in protecting and developing the environment in the UAE. He noted what he saw during his tour of the UAE, especially the island of Sir Bani Yas, which has turned from an arid desert to a green oasis and nature reserve.

The PRC vice premier also expounded on relations of cooperation and friendship between the UAE and PRC, noting that his highness the UAE president's recent visit to China and the Chinese president's recent visit to the UAE helped to develop relations between the two countries.

The two sides discussed means to reinforce relations of cooperation and friendship as well as international issues of mutual interest.

Yemen

Yemen: Al-Iryani Leaves for Paris To Sign Agreement With Eritrea

JN2005092496 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, left for Paris this morning on a working visit to France.

During the visit, al-Iryani will lead the Yemeni side to the signing ceremony of the agreement of principles with Eritrea regarding the arbitration to resolve the crisis resulting from the Eritrean occupation of the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. The signing ceremony will be held in the French capital, Paris, on Tuesday [21 May].

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', brother al-Iryani appreciated the efforts exerted by the fraternal and friendly states, led by France, to reach the agreement of principles.

He said that the signing of the agreement of principles will be the sound beginning for a peaceful solution to the crisis which resulted from the Eritrean occupation of the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

Al-Iryani added that arbitration is the definite guarantee to achieve security and stability in the Red Sea. Arbitration is also a guarantee for navigation in this sensitive and important area in terms of international trade, he said.

Concluding his statement, he expressed his firm belief that resolving this crisis is the sound beginning to return Yemeni-Eritrean relations to their previous level.

Al-Iryani is accompanied by a delegation including brothers adviser Husayn al-Hubayshi; Dr. 'Abd-al-Wahid al-Zindani; Dr. Ja'far Ba-Salih, deputy head of the Presidential Office; Ahmad al-Basha, ambassador at the Foreign Ministry; and Marwan Nu'man, head of the Africa Department at the Foreign Ministry.

Iraq: Al-Anbari Confers With UN's Hans Corell 16 May

*JN1705162696 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1600 GMT 17 May 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 17 May (INA)—Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, met with Hans Corell, head of the UN General Secretariat delegation, last night.

Dr. al-Anbari told an INA correspondent that the meeting focused on some of the issues related to the talks on oil for food, medicine, and the other basic needs.

Corell is expected to brief UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali tomorrow, 18 May, on the results reached by the two delegations, after the UN secretary general returns from Moscow.

Iraq: Butrus-Ghali To Be Consulted on Oil-for-Food Talks

*JN1805170296 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1630 GMT 18 May 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 18 May (INA)—UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali will begin consultations to assess the results of the talks between Iraq and the United Nations on oil for food, medicine, and the other basic needs tomorrow morning, New York time.

The UN secretary general is expected to meet with legal adviser Hans Corell, who led the UN General Secretariat delegation to the talks, tomorrow morning. Corell will present the results of the talks to the UN secretary general.

Iraq: Al-Anbari, UN Chief Review Progress in Oil Talks

*JN2005053596 Baghdad INA in Arabic
2100 GMT 19 May 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 19 May (INA)—Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali, UN secretary general, met with Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, Iraqi chief delegate, in New York today. Hans Corell, head of the delegation of the UN General Secretariat, attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the two reviewed the progress made by the two delegations in their talks on the exchange of oil for food, medicine, and other basic necessities.

Iraq: INA Cites New York-Based Group's Report Criticizing UNSC

*JN1705140096 Baghdad INA in English
1105 GMT 17 May 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, May 17, INA—An international team accused the U.N. Security Council [UNSC] of non-abidence by its humanitarian commitments and human rights in dealing with Iraqi citizens.

A report distributed by this team in the United Nations yesterday said that the Security Council was not committed to its responsibilities stated by the United Nations Charter and it also did not abide by the human right convention and international law.

The report added that the death of more than half a million Iraqi children as a result of the economic embargo represented the most serious violation of the humanitarian international law.

A number of this team members held a press conference at the United Nations yesterday in which they distributed their report after their three-week visit to Iraq where they were acquainted to the economic health conditions and the houses of the Iraqi citizens all over Iraq.

During their visit to Iraq they also visited hospitals, drinking water stations and the sewage pumping stations.

The international team of the New York-based Center of Economic and Social Rights included 24 experts of various social, economic, legal, humanitarian and food specialisations.

They came from nine countries namely: the United States, Britain, Pakistan, Japan, Jordan, Italy, Spain, Romania and Germany.

The team said that before imposing the comprehensive economic embargo in 1990 Iraq was one of the most advanced countries in the Middle East in health, educational and social fields. The Iraqi citizens, the team added, were enjoying social and economic conditions similar to those in the advanced countries.

The team report pointed out that the food rationing form was the effective method used by the government to prevent famine in Iraq. The report added that the rationing system is a just system and it is the best way of distribution witnessed by the world and it is implemented in an effective manner. The report said that the team did not see any discrimination in the distribution of the food rations among all Iraqi citizens.

In their press conference the members of the international team criticised through their report the allegations of the American Ambassador Madeleine Albright against Iraq. They accused her of using false statistics for internal purposes.

The report urged the U.N. Security Council to work seriously on discussing to what extent the embargo measures against Iraq were legal.

The report added that the death of more than half a million Iraqi children is the reason according to which the Security Council must shoulder its moral and legal responsibilities.

Iraq: Senior Opposition Leader Calls UN Sanctions 'Unfair'

LD1905120696 Tehran IRNA in English
0955 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 19, IRNA — A senior Iraqi opposition leader termed the U.N.-imposed sanctions on Iraq as unfair saying although the Baathist regime deserves severe punitive measures, it is unfair for the Iraqi nation to suffer shortage of food and medicine.

In an interview with the English daily TEHRAN TIMES, head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI), Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim urged the U.N. to make a distinction between the Iraqi nation and government in its sanctions.

He said that at a time when the Iraqi nation is starving under the U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, the oil-for-food deal, the Baathist regime extravagantly spends about dlrs. one billion annually for the construction of palaces decorated with gaudy finery.

Stating that there are thousands of families which the Iraqi regime has deprived of food coupons at present, he mentioned 22,000 families in southern province of Naseria as an instance.

"The SAIRI demands tight U.N. monitoring of the distribution of foodstuffs and medicine in Iraq," Ayatollah al-Hakim said.

Turning to his recent meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria, he said the two sides agreed on a conference to tackle the details of an Iraqi national plan whose principles have been agreed upon during a Damascus meeting. He said that the plan calls for certain changes in Iraq.

More on the Damascus conference, Ayatollah al-Hakim said that in the final statement, the participants called for designing a national plan to bring about certain changes in Iraq with the cooperation of all Iraqi opposition groups and the military.

Asked whether presiding over the Damascus conference meant that SAIRI would be the leader of the opposition groups, he said, "There was no word on leadership, but as the participants trusted SAIRI they had assigned him to preside over the conference."

On the repeated incursions of Turkish troops to Iraqi Kurdistan, he said that there is consensus between Ankara and Baghdad on the Turkish operation against the Iraqi Kurds.

"SAIRI maintains there is no justification for such military activitiy inside Iraqi territory," he said.

Turning to the Ankara-Tel Aviv military accord, he referred to the Zionist regime as the chief violator of international law saying the agreement will not serve Turkey's national interests.

Ayatollah al-Hakim urged the Iraqi nation to maintain their unity saying that through unity a massive revolution would be materialized in Iraq.

Iraq: Daily Demands Security Council Fulfill 'Obligations'

JN1905085496 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0630 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 19 May (INA) — AL-THAWRAH notes that an international team has accused the Security Council of abandoning its international responsibilities and human rights in dealing with the Iraqi people. The paper says the Security Council should fulfill its obligations toward Iraq. Tendentious parties in it should stop their policies that seek to prolong the unfair blockade against the Iraqi people.

In an article today, the paper says this international team includes 24 experts and represents nine countries, the United States, Britain, Pakistan, Japan, Jordan, Italy, Spain, Romania, and Germany.

The paper adds: The fact that this team includes U.S. and British experts means that there are experts in these two countries who differ with Mrs. Albright and U.S. State Department officials over Iraq's policy and the devastating consequences of the unfair blockade, which caused the death of half a million Iraqi children in the name of "international legitimacy" and "human rights" which Mrs. Albright speaks about.

AL-THAWRAH says this team represents the New York-based Center of Economic and Social Rights. This team presented a report that reminds us of another fair report by Harvard University experts and other reports that speak about the criminal effects of the unjust blockade against the Iraqi people that has no legal or moral justification.

The paper asserts that Iraq has fulfilled its commitments toward Resolution 687 and is waiting for the Security Council to fulfill its commitments toward this resolution under Paragraph 22. Iraq has held talks with the United Nations on oil for food and medicine in a constructive spirit. It displayed great cooperation in spite of illegal U.S.-British interference. Iraq reminds the international community of its full fight to have the blockade completely lifted under Resolution 687 to enable it to exercise its natural rights and pursue its development efforts.

Iraq: Price Hikes Linked to UN Oil Talks

JN1705141096 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 5 May 96 pp 1, 3

[From the "Viewpoint" column by Chief Editor Salah al-Mukhtar: "Some Merchants Are Playing With Fire by Increasing Prices; What About Dialogue? What Is the Latest Concerning the Blockade?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Some merchants do not want to benefit from the tolerance and patience of the people's authority, which has provided them with unlimited opportunities to make legal profits without harming the people or causing them pain. Iraq's enemies have failed to do this. The pain caused by a brother hurts more than the pain caused by a foreign enemy.

The past two days witnessed a sudden increase in the prices of some basic commodities. This has encouraged citizens to level strong accusations at some merchants, something that shows our people have gained the necessary experience regarding the market situation, its fluctuating prices, and its changing commodities.

The most important accusation the citizens leveled at merchants is that nothing has happened over the past few days that could be used as a reason to increase prices. The dollar's value abroad did not change, neither plus nor minus, and the commodities in the market did not suddenly dry up. Therefore, the increase in prices was economically unnecessary. It was fabricated by a handful of merchants who have tasted human blood and can no longer resist the temptation of drinking the blood of their brothers to satisfy their illegal whims.

The ordinary citizen's awareness has reached a stage of maturity that has enabled him to objectively and thoroughly analyze events with an open mind and to determine whether this event was positive or negative. For example, one citizen commented on the sudden price increase by saying that the merchants claim that the third round of dialogue [oil-for-food talks] was not successful and that a fourth round will be held, something that makes the relatively low prices unprofitable for merchants.

The logic of some merchants is the logic of someone who knows but pretends that he is ignorant in order to achieve illegitimate objectives that are unacceptable to human conscience and in conflict with national interests. The merchant who participated in the game of increasing prices knows full well that the dialogue will take an indeterminate amount of time as long as there are disputed issues and the two international parties interfere, directly or by exerting pressure, to obstruct the dialogue because they cannot foil it. This is why the Iraqi and UN delegations are not abiding by a specific deadline. They consult their higher authorities whenever necessary. This is natural. The proof is that the first round, despite the merchants' claims that it reached a dead end, resulted in important agreements, and that the parties agreed to hold a second round to discuss unresolved issues. The second round also resulted in other agreements and in setting a date for the third round of dialogue on the remaining issues.

Unscrupulous and greedy merchants do not want to hear the radio and television reports that emphasize two facts: namely, that the United States cannot scuttle the dialogue, as we have noted and will explain in detail, and that a general view has been clearly shaped. This view is pushing for the success of the dialogue. The parties that hold this view are making daring charges against the United States and Britain over their stand on the sanctions. Germany, Italy, and France have been critical of these two countries' position on the issue. We will explain this so the delusions promoted by the merchants about the progress of the dialogue will come to naught.

Can the United States scuttle the ongoing dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations? A speedy and reckless answer to this question would be in the affirmative. If they do so, they will draw the greatest and most significant condemnation in the past five years. They will be charged with deliberate interference in an attempt to scuttle a dialogue that is proceeding most successfully, as attested to by all, including the United States' closest allies, such as France, Germany, Italy, and others, who acknowledge Iraq's flexibility and cooperation and maintain that the dialogue will succeed.

Is this a mere conclusion we are drawing? No. This is a blow to the U.S. and British envoys to the United Nations. It is sufficient to review the comments by some permanent and nonpermanent members of the UN Security Council [UNSC] when the United States and

Britain deliberately leaked information on the progress of the dialogue to the press, which goes against the UNSC's wishes. The fact that the United States and Britain made their demands in the press drew the wrath and consternation of 13 out of 15 UNSC members. How did the United States' closest allies react?

A review of these comments shows that all the comments by the 13 UNSC members, most of whom are allies or friends of the United States, sharply and unequivocally denounced the U.S.-British move, which has not happened in the last five years. These denunciations were such that the U.S. and British envoys were confused and concerned and failed to give acceptable replies, which aggravated the wrath of the other ambassadors, particularly the Italian, German, French, and Russian ambassadors. What does this mean? In all clarity, this means that the United States and Britain were unequivocally condemned at the UNSC for their conduct and that the so-called "international legitimacy" commended Iraq's positive attitude. Most UNSC members demanded the easing of the Iraqi people's suffering by resuming the dialogue and preventing any party from thwarting it.

For these reasons, the United States and Britain began efforts to avoid official condemnation and continuous isolation. They made statements that appeared to be positive and harmonious with the ambassadors' views, particularly when Mrs. Albright reiterated her strong optimism over the success of the dialogue in the next round of talks.

In addition, the United States cannot make a stupid mistake by foiling the dialogue, because the success of this dialogue will pave the way for solving a sensitive and vital part of the UN financial crisis, particularly with regard to the continuation of the work of the United Nations and its commissions in Iraq. The empty UN treasury can no longer fund the UN commissions in Iraq. The export of quantities of Iraqi oil are the only solution to this crisis. The importance of Iraq's financial support for UN activities can only be realized if we consider the fact that the abnormal situation in northern Iraq and the continuation of the UN teams' visits to Iraq and the so-called humanitarian program in Iraq will collapse or stop if there is no funding.

Furthermore, the United States is exposed to increasing pressure from its closest allies and friends as a result of the huge financial damages that have been inflicted on them or as a result of the political repercussions that may result from strong popular pressure on Arab and Islamic governments for not helping the Iraqi people. The United States cannot ignore these factors, which might develop into unexpected situations. Therefore, the United States has an interest in making the dialogue a success in order to absorb the strong pressure to which it is being exposed and to prevent the sympathy with the Iraqi people from becoming a global and regional political force that will inevitably be used against the United States in its global role.

The other fact that makes the failure of the dialogue detrimental to the United States is that the three rounds of dialogue have resolved all the major problems, such as imports, exports, distribution inside Iraq, pumping Iraqi oil through the Turkish pipeline, and the special fund. The only unresolved issue is distribution inside the self-rule area. This issue has, in fact, been resolved now that Iraq and the United Nations have agreed on the Iraqi Government's responsibility for distribution inside Iraq. And since the north is part of Iraq, something reiterated by the UN resolutions, the implementation of the agreement on northern Iraq will be a natural outcome.

Washington and London wanted — through their direct interference, which drew condemnation — to impose conditions that encroach on Iraq's national unity. The Iraqi negotiators rejected these conditions, something that the United States and Britain exploited in order to once again accuse Iraq of rejecting cooperation with the United Nations. However, what happened contradicted this. Pursuant to the instructions of the Iraqi leadership, the Iraqi negotiators were not dragged down by the U.S.-British provocations. The Iraqi negotiators invested and will continue to invest the positive new conditions by continuing the dialogue with seriousness and responsibility toward the Iraqi people. This stand increased the respect for Iraq by other states, including U.S. allies, such as Germany, Italy, and Korea, in addition to the other Security Council members, such as Russia, France, and China, who have wanted the dialogue to succeed from the start.

What will happen? First, we must reiterate that the dialogue will resume very soon and will focus on an essential issue: distribution in northern Iraq. The 13 members of the Security Council will try to prevent the United States and Britain from following their policy of obstruction and postponement for the sake of making political gains at the expense of other countries. The atmosphere of the next round of dialogue will show that Iraq is serious about its success, that it is ready for this success, and that it has many options to face the U.S. and British wickedness.

Merchants must read the speeches of the 13 ambassadors carefully. They must also review the Iraqi press reports and the reports by international radio stations over the last four days on the German and Italian criticism of the U.S. policies, which are facing increasing global resistance. Merchants must analyze why Germany and Italy have joined the criticism of the United States, by countries like France, Russia, China, and others. This review will enable the merchants to rid themselves of their delusions and will help them behave correctly toward the people, who are getting close to an end to the siege, not just to exporting limited quantities of oil.

However, if these merchants have already read and listened to these reports and realize that the dialogue will succeed and that the siege will be lifted soon, something that we expect to happen, then the increase in prices can only be explained as a new game to make high profits before the breakthrough and before we cross to the other side of the river. The imminent breakthrough will force them to sell their commodities at very low prices.

Despite its forbearance and concern for the Iraqi people, including merchants, the power of the people cannot allow the Iraqi people to be harmed again and cannot be lenient toward those who are enslaved by their whims. Therefore, those who play the game of increasing prices should beware of the near future.

Iraq: 3 Officials Reportedly Fail To Return to Iraq as Ordered

NC1705163996 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Unified National Iraqi Congress has said that the former Iraqi regime's consul in Jordan, Sa'd 'Abd-al-Rida, has gone to an unknown destination after disobeying the regime's order to return to Iraq. This came in a statement by the Congress in which it says that the former Iraqi diplomat was seen on 25 April 1996 packing his bags, thus giving the impression that he was returning to Baghdad. However, reports say he has not reached Baghdad.

The statement adds that Baghdad has asked the diplomat Sa'd 'Abd-al-Rida and the former Iraqi consul, Salim 'Abd-al-Husayn, who works for the Saddamite intelligence, to return to Iraq. It also adds that another officer in the oppressive intelligence organization, Husayn Faraj, was supposed to have accompanied 'Abd-al-Rida and 'Abd-al-Husayn on their return journey. However, to date, they have not reached Iraq.

Iraq: Border Controls Reportedly Tightened To Limit Defections

JN2005121396 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 20 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources said that a senior Iraqi officer fled to the Kurdish area in northern Iraq in order to join the Iraqi opposition in Jordan.

These sources told AL-MAJD that Colonel 'Abd-al-Basit al-Samarra'i will not be the last Iraqi officer to flee in order to join the Amman-based Iraqi National Accord, an opposition organization. The sources pointed out that Iraqi officers flee to northern Iraq en route to Jordan due to the strict security measures recently taken by the Iraqi authorities on the border with Jordan. According to these measures, Iraqis who want to leave their country undergo long searches and stringent scrutiny.

Iraq: Opposition Group Says 150 Army Officers Arrested

LD1705212096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1930 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Vienna, 17 May (KUNA) — An Iraqi opposition organization has said that the Iraqi regime's military intelligence apparatus has recently arrested about 150 administration officers in the Republican Guard's divisions and in the Sixth and Fourteenth Divisions.

Citing its sources inside Iraq, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq said in a communique released here today that the interrogation of those arrested was still under way in large embezzlement cases and the selling of military weapons and equipment to civilians.

According to information described as being "precise," the communique added that the arrested officers were of the ranks of lieutenant and captain, including six senior officers with administrative duties whose ranks ranged between lieutenant colonel, colonel, and brigadier general. [passage omitted]

The communique did not exclude the possibility that the arrest of those officers was attributed to political reasons within the continuous attempts by the Baghdad regime to replace effective elements by others.

At another level, the assembly cited "informed sources inside the Iraqi military institution" as saying that the head of the regime, Saddam Husayn, issued recently an order depriving the "Ba'th" party of the responsibility for pursuing opponents and deserters from the Iraqi army and assigning this responsibility to the military intelligence apparatus. [passage omitted]

The communique said that the head of the Iraqi regime had ordered the party to restrict its task to spying and information gathering only.

Iraq: Regime Artillery Continues Shelling of Kurdish City

NC1805154296 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The 'Aflaqite regime's artillery in (Banimakhan) has continued to bombard the outskirts of the city of Chamchamal since early this morning.

Iraq: PUK Statement Claims 700 Kurds Arrested

NC1705131996 Paris AFP in English
1251 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, May 17 (AFP)—Iraqi police have arrested 700 Kurds in the city of Karkuk, in an oil-rich region on the edge of Kurdish-held northern Iraq, an opposition group said on Friday [17 May].

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), in a statement received here, said the arrests were carried out on May 13.

"Only a few of the detainees have been released ... [ellipsis as received] while the others are reported to be interrogated under torture for suspected links with the Kurdish opposition," the PUK said.

"The latest operation is seen as part of the escalating harassment and intimidation of Kurdish residents of Karkuk," it said.

"In recent months, the Iraqi regime has escalated its deportation campaign against Kurdish and Turkoman inhabitants of Karkuk as part of its policy to Arabize the city to change its demographic characteristics."

The PUK along with its rival Kurdistan Democratic Party have controlled most of northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War for Kuwait.

Iraq: Extension of Term Sought for Kurdish Parliament

NC1705161596 Paris AFP in English
1527 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Irbil, Iraq, May 17 (AFP) — Efforts are under way to extend the Kurdish parliament's mandate in northern Iraq, which was agreed in May last year after fighting between the two main factions ruled out new elections, officials said.

Parliament, elected in 1992, a year after the Kurdish-controlled area broke free of Baghdad's control, has not been convened since March 1995 because of the feud between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

"We don't want to bear the historical responsibility towards our Kurdish people. We are with the renewal of the parliamentary period and this will give better chance for peace between us," said Francois Hariri, head of the KDP group in parliament.

Hazim al-Yusufi, deputy head of the PUK's parliamentary group, told AFP "efforts are running from all sides to find a suitable" legal solution to the problem, adding "I don't want to talk about the non-renewal of parliament."

But PUK deputy Doctor Fu'ad Ma'sun said no agreement to extend the parliament's mandate, which runs out at the end of May, had been reached yet.

"We, up to now, couldn't reach with KDP a comprehensive agreement regarding the unresolved issues," he said, adding that "the parliament is one of these issues."

Kusrat Rasul, the prime minister of the Kurdistan regional government, said: "The decision of extending the parliament is subject to its members' opinion."

The conflict between the PUK and KDP, who each won 50 percent of the seats in the 1992 elections, has killed more than 2,000 people since May 1994.

The parliament's mandate originally expired on May 17 of last year, but it was extended for a year in a specially-convened meeting held in a village outside Irbil.

Last month a U.S. mission led by the U.S. State Department's coordinator for northern Gulf affairs, John Deutsch, visited northern Iraq to try to broker a truce between the PUK leader Jalal Talabani and his KDP rival Mas'ud Barzani.

Just before Deutsch's visit, the PUK and KDP signed a series of confidence building measures as a first step towards ending their conflict, and last year in Dublin they signed an agreement in principle.

The PUK and KDP secured control of northern Iraq in 1991 when the allies imposed an air exclusion zone there following their victory over Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Iraq: Spokesman Regrets Turkish Statements on Right to Incursions

JN1905173796 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1615 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 19 May (INA)—Iraq regretted the statements made by Nurettin Nurkan, deputy spokesman for the Turkish Foreign Ministry, on 9 May 1996. In his statements, Nurkan said that Turkey has security concerns as a result of the terrorist acts of the Turkish Kurdish Workers Party [PKK], and that

Turkey has the right to enter northern Iraq to confront that terrorism because PKK terrorists are stationed there. Nurkan said that incursions into northern Iraq will continue until that terrorism is eradicated.

In a statement to INA today, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said that the Government of the Republic of Iraq regrets such statements which can only be interpreted as persistent violations of the sovereignty and inviolability of Iraqi territory and airspace. This has been manifested by a new Turkish invasion of Iraqi territory since 6 May on the pretext of chasing Kurdish separatist elements from Turkey and in a continued air and long-range artillery bombardment of Iraqi cities and villages. These actions have resulted in human losses among Iraqi Kurdish citizens in the areas which have been under continued attacks and bombardment. Such acts constitute a flagrant violation of the principles of international law, good-neighborly relations, the UN Charter, and the Iraqi-Turkish border treaty of 1926.

The spokesman added that the Government of the Republic of Iraq has frequently stressed and stresses again that what the Turkish officials call political vacuum in northern Iraq and the ensuing worrying situation for Turkey are the outcome of the U.S. plot to which Turkey contributed through its agreement to receive and accept the continued presence of the so-called U.S.-British Poised Hammer Force in its territory. This force has been using Turkish territory as a springboard for launching hostile acts against Iraq and against its sovereignty and territorial integrity and for interference in its domestic affairs. This has resulted in the spread of chaos not only in northern Iraq, but also in Turkey itself. What is taking place now confirms Iraq's view.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman urged the Turkish Government to withdraw all its invading troops immediately and not to repeat such acts which are not in line with statements by Turkish officials in which they voice their concern about Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and about noninterference in domestic affairs.

Israel: Security Forces Capture 2 'Top' Hamas Fugitives in Hebron

TA1805112996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israeli security forces have caught two top Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fugitives in Hebron: Hasan Salamah and Rizaq 'Abdallah al-Rujub. Border Police stopped the car they were driving in to search it. Salamah tried to run away and was shot and captured. He was taken to 'Aliyah Hospital in Hebron in serious condition. Al-Rujub, a resident of Dura village near Hebron, was driving the car.

Salamah, the deputy of the Hamas military wing leader Muhammad Dayf, is suspected of planning three suicide bombings in Israel in February and March, which killed 59 people. These include the bombings of two no. 18 buses in Jerusalem and an attack near Ashqelon. Dayf is still at large.

According to Palestinian sources, Salamah fled to Egypt from Gaza in 1990 and received military training in Syria and Sudan before returning home six months ago. A visitor at 'Aliyah Hospital quoted Salamah as saying on his arrival that he wanted to be a martyr and not to be arrested by the Israelis.

Al-Rujub is a relative of Jibril al-Rujub, the head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service. Jibril al-Rujub is said to have visited 'Aliyah Hospital early this morning.

In a search of their vehicle, Border Police found an 'Uzi submachine gun, a pistol and other arms, as well as sacks of flour.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 18 Mayprovides the following additional details: "Major General 'Uzi Dayan, the commander of the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command, and Major General Gabi Ofir, the commander of the IDF in Judaea and Samaria, went last night to the scene of the capture of the two senior Hamas terrorists and praised the Golani Brigade soldiers who participated in the operation.

["Hasan Salamah, the terrorist who was wounded and captured yesterday evening, was operated on by an Israeli medical team in Hebron last night and then transferred to a hospital in Israel."

["Hasan Salamah also recruited a terrorist network made up of 11 women in East Jerusalem's Ra's al-'Amud area. This network assisted the suicide terrorists and planned to kidnap and murder IDF soldiers in the Jerusalem area. Salamah's brother, Anjad, was arrested approximately one week ago when he arrived from abroad in order to carry out terrorist attacks.

["A senior security source told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that there was no doubt that the capture of Salamah and Rizaq al-Rujub would help the efforts to capture terrorist leaders Muhammad Dayf and Muhi al-Din al-Sharif, who remain at large.

["The source told our correspondent that over the past few weeks, Hasan Salamah had been planning additional terrorist attacks against Israelis. The investigation is now focusing on the question of whether the two terrorists were on their way to carry out an attack when captured or whether they were transferring weapons to other terrorists.

["This morning, the Israeli security forces raided the home of Rizaq al-Rujub in the village of Dura in the Hebron District and arrested two members of his family who are suspected of aiding Hasan Salamah."]

Israel: Hamas Leaflet Pledges Revenge for Salamah Capture

TA1905062596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 19 May 96

[Report by Mark Weiss]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] In a leaflet issued last night, the military wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] threatened to avenge the capture of Hasan Salamah. In the words of the leaflet, the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam brigades will not hesitate to carry out the strongest revenge against the coward Zionists for this ugly crime. The message stressed that Salamah's capture will not affect the operational ability of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam units. [passage omitted]

The West Bank military commander, Major General Gabi Ofir, says eight people have been detained in the wake of the questioning of Hasan Salamah and of Raziq al-Rujub, the Hamas activist who was traveling with him in Hebron on Friday [17 May] night.

The head of Central Command, Maj. Gen. 'Uzi Dayan, said that Salamah was planning new terrorist attacks, although he stressed that his capture does not put an end to the immediate terrorist threat.

Dayan also revealed that Hamas was responsible for last week's shooting close to the West Bank settlement of Bet El and said there has been progress in this investigation. [passage omitted]

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres called Salamah's capture an achievement of the highest order. We know he was planning new attacks, the prime minister said, and intensive efforts were made to track him down.

Despite the satisfaction among political and security circles, it should be borne in mind that the No. 1 Hamas fugitive, Muhammad Dayf, is still at large in Gaza.

Israel: IDF Raids Dura in Area B, Detains Al-Rujub's Relatives

TA1905113096 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 19 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] IDF [Israel Defense Forces] forces yesterday raided the town of Dura in the southern part of the Hebron hills. This town is the home of Raziq al-Rujub, who was detained with Hasan Salamah by an IDF force in Hebron on Friday [17 May].

Palestinian sources said that IDF forces entered Dura in Area B, which is under Palestinian Police control. The sources said that IDF forces usually do not enter this area.

The sources said that upon their arrival, the IDF soldiers demanded that the Palestinian Police personnel remain in their bases. They proceeded to detain nine persons in the town, including the wife of Raziq al-Rujub, who is a distant relative of Jibril al-Rujub, head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in Judaea and Samaria. [passage omitted]

Israel: Security Forces on 'Highest-Ever Level of Alert'

TA1905110396 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 19 May 96 p 9

[Report by Doron Me'iri]

[FBIS Translated Text] The security forces are observing the highest-ever level of alert since the State of Israel's establishment, a senior security source told YEDI'OT AHARONOT last night.

The man added that the security forces have received countless warnings about various rejectionist organizations' determination to carry out mass attacks before next week's elections at any cost.

Police elements yesterday rejected the theory that terrorist organizations are capable of striking practically at any time but are waiting to carry out an attack as close to the elections as possible for better effect and in order to achieve their goal of ousting the present regime. "Over the past few months, terrorist organizations from every stream have tried and are trying to strike at us, but they have failed," the elements said. "We maintain a very alert watch these days, hoping this tense period will end well."

Israel: West Bank Closure Tightened; Baraq, Or Comment on Salamah

TA1805191796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is tightening the closure on Judaea and Samaria as well. As of tonight, all measures related to easing the closure, which were in effect to date, are being canceled. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports, however, that the transfer of goods will continue, and humanitarian cases, VIP's, foreigners, diplomats, and medical teams will be allowed entrance.

A security source says that the terrorist Hasan Salamah who was captured yesterday was sent by the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] military leadership from the Gaza Strip to Judaea and Samaria to replace Yahya 'Ayyash and resume terrorism in the West Bank and within the Green Line. Major General Gabi Ofir, commander of the IDF forces in Judaea and Samaria, told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the security forces have so far detained 18 suspects following the capture and interrogation of Salamah and al-Rujub. Security sources say, however, that there are still many warnings about possible attacks on Pentecost and in anticipation of the elections.

Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says that Salamah's capture is an achievement for the security forces and that it constitutes a blow to terrorism, but added that it has not eradicated terrorism. Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or also expressed himself in similar terms.

Israel: 'At Least' 20 Fugitives Said Planning Suicide Attacks

TA1805143096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Security sources say that even after the capture of the terrorist Hasan Salamah there are at least 20 more fugitives who are continuing to plan attacks. They also said that many warnings keep coming in about terrorist attacks and suicide attacks in the planning stages. The security sources told our correspondent Karmela Menashe that Hasan Salamah's capture is an intelligence and operational achievement, but we must not make a mistake and think that terrorism has been ended.

Israel: Cabinet Briefed on 'Hundreds' of Attack Warnings

TA1905102896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0905 GMT 19 May 96

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today's cabinet meeting was declared a meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Security Affairs, and it is at least for this reason that we cannot go into details — but the report by the chief of staff, for one, pointed to very unpleasant warnings about intentions to perpetrate terrorist attacks in Israel. [Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 19 May carries a report by political correspondent Udi Segal who says that "at the cabinet meeting today, Peres spoke of a supreme effort by all security branches to foil terrorist incidents against the background of hundreds of warnings about Islamic organizations' intentions to perpetrate demonstrative attacks before the elections. There are also specific warnings about an intention to carry out a terrorist attack on election day itself, Peres again emphasized."] As said, the meeting was short and lasted for two hours only as the ministers are busy with the election campaign.

Minister Ora Namir read out her letter of resignation, in preparation for assuming the post of ambassador to the PRC, and the prime minister thanked her for her service. Ministers told me that the atmosphere during the meeting was matter-of-fact, business as usual. Let us go back to the chief of staff's remarks on warnings about terrorist attacks. The closure on the territories has been tightened, as we all know, and Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq also reported about the capture of Hasan Salamah; all the developments which led to this capture; and the incident in southern Lebanon, where the situation is reported to be very tense.

As for the territories, General Oren Shahor reported an economic improvement there and an increase in exports, while on the other hand the unemployment rate is quite high. Israel talks of 30 percent unemployment, while the Palestinians talk of an even higher rate. Incidentally, the cabinet meeting was followed by a discussion at the prime minister's office on the divide line. This meeting is supposed to be over now, but I understand there are no conclusions yet.

Perhaps in connection with the elections and perhaps regardless, the government decided to equalize the conditions of the Arab villages on the northern border to those of the Jewish ones. Reference is to those villages hit by katyushas: Mi'ilya, Fassuta, 'Arab al-'Aramshah, and Ghajar. They will finally be given shelters and tax benefits, as is the case with the Jewish towns. Minister Yosi Sarid, who initiated the debate on the issue, spoke of an ugly stain which has thus been removed. On a related matter, a ministerial team consisting of Shohat, Ben-Eli'ezer, Qeysar, Beilin, and Sarid convened prior to the cabinet meeting and approved 50 million shekels over the next three years for eight previously unrecognized Arab villages for infrastructure needs. 'En Hud, perhaps the symbol of these villages, received 50 million shekels this year already.

Israel: Sources Say Security Procedures Not Expected To Change

TA1705183496 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 17 May 96

[Qobi Marenko video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The security procedures at the entrances to Israel will not change. This was stated today by defense establishment sources — this despite the entrance of the terrorist who blew himself up in Jerusalem through Ben-Gurion Airport with a false passport and explosives. Our correspondent Qobi Marenko reports on preparations by the security forces following the discovery of the terrorist and brings new details from the investigation:

[Begin recording] [Marenko] Defense establishment sources say the fact that Husayn al-Miqdad passed through Ben-Gurion Airport's passport control should not result in a change of concept. A top alert and stepped up checks are already being implemented on the ground. The possibility of purchasing advanced equipment is also being considered. The basic concept, however, will not change. This concept is based on the assumption that the terrorist with the explosives should have been discovered in Switzerland. This is where al-Miqdad should have been checked in a different manner. The basic difference between the Israeli concept and that usually adopted abroad is indicated in the questioning method — namely, a thorough check of every passenger who is considered suspicious. The defense establishment sources say this method has proved itself many times in the past, but Israel cannot force it on other countries.

[Menahem Sharon, head of Israel Airports Authority] I believe that the Swiss Government is interested in safeguarding Swiss planes no less — rather more — than the Israeli Government is interested in Swiss planes.

[Marenko] Today we also learned new details of the investigation. It transpires that one of the targets for the attack was a Jerusalem mall. There is no certainty that the terrorist who blew himself up in the hotel planned to carry out a suicide attack. The defense establishment emphasized today that for quite some time now reports have been coming in that Iran will try to smuggle terrorists into Israel. A warning to this effect was relayed to all countries flying to Israel. Great efforts are being directed in the preventive sphere. Gathering information about the planning of attacks does not always suffice. [end recording]

Israel: IDF, Foreign Ministry Deny Violating Lebanon Understandings

TA1905152496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] Both Syria and Hizballah have accused Israel of breaching the understandings reached after Operation Grapes of Wrath by shelling civilian targets. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] says it is checking the reports of a civilian casualty from IDF fire but Israel has already officially denied that its actions today in any way violated the understandings.

Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir said that Hizballah is operating out of populated areas and that it bears the sole blame if people are injured. And, he added, while Israel is interested in stability in south Lebanon, it will continue to grant the IDF full freedom of action against hostile activity.

Israel: Lubrani—IDF Reaction Not Violation of Understandings

TA1905150996 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 19 May 96

[Telephone interview with Uri Lubrani, coordinator of government activities in Lebanon, by Shlomi Stein and Mikhal Gazit; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Stein] Hizballah and Syria are claiming that Israel today violated the understandings reached in the wake of Operation Grapes of Wrath. Is their intention to allow Hizballah to erode these understandings and resume the katyusha attacks in the near future?

[Lubrani] Today we definitely did not violate the understandings. I say this unequivocally. We are now entering a period in which these understandings will be tested almost daily. The activity in Lebanon has not stopped. Some people believe that the understandings amount to a cease-fire and that all is well. This is untrue. We face confrontations daily, and today's events show that things can get even worse.

[Stein] Do you detect any attempts by Hizballah to erode the understandings?

[Lubrani] Hizballah will do everything it can to harm us. We will have to wait and see how they do this and to what extent they will be careful not to violate the understandings. Today there was an incident and they claim that our reaction constituted a violation of the understandings, but this is untrue.

[Gazit] They claim that civilians have been harmed; fishermen and a Lebanese woman.

[Lubrani] In this case they were operating out of a residential area and escaped to a populated village.

[Gazit] So we directed our fire on that area in the framework of the freedom of action awarded the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in the improved understandings reached after Operation Grapes of Wrath.

[Lubrani] Certainly. There is no doubts about it. We have the right to self-defense.

[Stein] From what you say I can surmise that these written understandings are also open to different interpretations by both sides. We say that we have not violated the understandings, while they maintain the opposite. This can result in an impending explosion.

[Lubrani] I believe that the new understandings of May 1996 are much sharper and clearer than those achieved in 1993. This does not mean, however, that there is no room for different interpretations of the 1996 understandings. Today both sides accused each other and both believe they are right. This is precisely the reason for the establishment of the monitoring committee — whose mandate and modus operandi have still not been concluded.

[Stein] What do you expect to happen in the next meeting of the monitoring committee?

[Lubrani] It has still not met, because the details of its operation have still not been finalized. I believe this will take some time. But once this happens each side will have to decide whether it wants to take its complaints to the committee. If they do so, the committee will enter the picture. I hope it will be able to determine precisely what happened.

Israel: Peres on Qana, Peace Process, Elections

MM1705160896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 May 96 p 17

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Nazir Majali in Tel Aviv; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Majali] Are you more confident and less worried after meeting, this week, with the Arabs heading the [parties'] electoral lists?

[Peres] I do not know. I am waiting for them to let me know the outcome of their private meetings in order to ascertain their final position.

[Majali] What did you think of their initial reactions?

[Peres] I believe they were good. At first I was surprised at the position of the Arab leaders in Israel (when they threatened to urge people not to vote for Peres to head the government).

[Majali] Why were you surprised?

[Peres] What did they expect me to do? During seven days and seven nights, they launched Katyushas on Jewish and Arab villages in the north of the country. If I am the security minister, do I keep quiet? Do I just stand with my arms folded? What happened yesterday? Come, let us talk about what happened yesterday, and let us leave the "Grapes of Wrath" aside. They opened fire and wounded five soldiers. What would you have done in my place?

[Majali] Are you asking me?

[Peres] Yes.

[Majali] Why hurt the civilians? Why force hundreds of thousands of people to leave their homes and villages?

[Peres] First, there were not hundreds of thousands of people who were displaced. What do you do when Hizballah men hide among civilians? What can you do when a Hizballah group takes shelter in a village from where they fire rockets at Israeli civilians and Kiryat Shmona?

[Majali] We are talking about a state versus groups of partisans, and we are talking about new circumstances and a climate of peace. Why get sucked into a force which, according to you, wants to undermine the peace process?

[Peres] They want to topple the government. They fired 1,000 Katyusha rockets. We controlled ourselves once, twice, three times..."then what" (he said it in Arabic).

[Majali] But what crime did the civilians commit?

[Peres] It would have been possible not to hit the civilians, had they not allowed Hizballah to use them as a shield. You who live in the state of Israel, do you really believe that we would deliberately give orders to kill civilians, as in the case of Qana [sentence as published]?

[Majali] Civilians were not hurt only in Qana. I am determined to talk about the hundreds of thousands of people who were forced to flee.

[Peres] I told you there were not hundreds of thousands.

[Majali] How many then?

[Peres] Perhaps 150,000.

[Majali] A small number?

[Peres] Our objective was to differentiate between innocent people and Hizballah, and this is what we did.

[Majali] But this is a discipline inflicted on those innocent people, some of whom were killed, while others had their homes destroyed.

[Peres] No. Only the homes of Hizballah members and leaders were damaged.

[Majali] Are you sure? All the reports from Lebanon talk about serious damage to the homes of people who have nothing to do with Hizballah.

[Peres] Maybe 100-150 homes, no more, and only Hizballah's. Our soldiers did not open fire on the villages. We only shelled the entrances and perimeters. We had to do it.

[Majali] Was there not a failure of the intelligence services, which could not distinguish between homes and military camps?

[Peres] We knew where the leadership was hiding. They took shelter in hotels. Here, too, we were faced with the problem of whether or not to hit the hotels.

[Majali] What crime did the Beirut residents commit to have their power station shelled and be left in darkness for several weeks?

[Peres] It was because they hit the power station in Kiryat Shmona.

[Majali] The Beirut residents were the ones who hit it?

[Peres] No. Hizballah. Let the Beirut residents rise against Hizballah. This is the issue. Hizballah is the problem. In every state where two armies coexist, there is a disaster. We have always said that if the Lebanese Army disarms Hizballah, there will be no problem, but if they shelter it and condone its actions, what do they expect us to do?

[Majali] Why did you not try to negotiate the issue with the Lebanese Government?

[Peres] How could we? They are not the masters in their own house and Hizballah obeys Iran and fears Syria.

[Majali] If you are convinced that they are not the masters in their own house and cannot do anything, why are you putting pressure on them by waging war and displacing people?

[Peres] We want the people to prevent them (Hizballah) from entering their homes.

[Majali] If, as you say, the government is powerless, how can the civilians do anything?

[Peres] We have no other way. However, we now have an agreement. This is the first time that Syria and Lebanon have officially admitted their responsibility. In the past, they did not. We talked to the Americans. Look, it started with the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. Do you remember, they launched attacks on all the Israeli Army's positions, and later fired Katyushas. I turned to the Americans and asked them to tell the Syrians that if they fire, we will respond, twice as hard. That is how we reached an agreement, after the Syrians agreed. Yet, the following day, when the agreement should have been implemented, they sent a suicide bomber, who caused the death of one of our officers, and they set an explosive charge and opened fire on a military convoy.

[Majali] You talk about Syria as though it was the main culprit, and yet we hear you say all the time that Iran is to blame.

[Peres] Of course, it is Iran which sends Hizballah in, supports it, finances it, trains it, and gives it orders.

[Majali] But Iran did not suffer any losses in the "Grapes of Wrath" war.

[Peres] It did. Its loss was when the Syrian and Lebanese Governments intervened and assumed their responsibility.

[Majali] Are you saying that Israel can do nothing to the Iranians?

[Peres] There is something that can be done, but patience, patience. The noose is gradually tightening. The world recognizes the appalling part. It puts pressure on Hizballah, on [Islamic] Jihad, and, to some extent, on Hamas. Ultimately, they must pay the price.

[Majali] To whom? Who will make them pay?

[Peres] The world.

[Majali] Including Israel?

[Peres] What about Israel?

[Majali] An international alliance: Western-Arab, with Israel's participation for example?

[Peres] Yes. I believe that this is what will happen in the end.

[Majali] How could Arab states join such an alliance, when we see that the "Grapes of Wrath" war has caused a chill in relations, commercial or otherwise, between Israel and the Arab states that had opened their doors to it?

[Peres] At this stage, I cannot talk about the participation of other Arab states, but this remains possible. No doubt they will study it and discuss it. Look, if the Iranians achieve their objective, which is being carried out by Hizballah and Jihad, and my government is defeated in the elections, this will be the end of peace. If the Arabs stand to gain anything from this, they are welcome to it.

[Majali] You think that, if victorious, Likud will undermine the peace?

[Peres] Likud will resume settlement in the West Bank. You can decide whether that is the end of peace or not. Likud is saying that there can be no withdrawal from the Golan. Is that conducive to peace with Syria? Sharon describes 'Arafat as a war criminal. That is how they are; will they achieve peace?

[Majali] What do you think of 'Arafat?

[Peres] I believe that he is performing his duty toward his people. Sometimes, he has a better grasp of the situation and events than many Israeli leaders do. He knows, for example, that only a few terrorist operations are needed for the peace process to be over for good. This is a fact. I believe that there are two elections campaigns here. The first is between Labor and Likud, and the second is between us and Iran and its followers among Hizballah, Jihad, and the other fundamentalists.

[Majali] Is Iran the number one enemy today?

[Peres] It is the number one enemy of the peace process, of all the Arabs, and all the Middle Eastern states which support the peace.

[Majali] Let us return to the chill in the normalization with some Arab states, in the wake of "Grapes of Wrath." What do you intend to do to improve relations?

[Peres] We have done much and are still trying. We have told them that we gave the Palestinians what nobody has ever given them. The West Bank and Gaza Strip will be under complete Arab rule.

[Majali] A state?

[Peres] We gave the Egyptians and the Jordanians all their land back, and we are serious about achieving peace. We intend to have relations with all Arab states, and we already have relations with seven of them.

[Majali] When you say seven states, do you also mean a Palestinian state?

[Peres] I said states, I mean seven titles.

[Majali] What does Israel want from its relations with the Arab world. Let us take for example the Gulf states?

[Peres] I want to normalize relations, I want normal relations. I do not want anything else from them.

[Majali] Oil. Gas.

[Peres] They are the ones to benefit from the oil and gas. You are aware of the international competition in this field. There are more vendors than buyers. Contrary to common belief, we will ask an Arab state to sell us electricity. Why should we buy oil from them to generate electricity? We would rather buy it directly from them instead. There is such a project with Jordan. They provide job opportunities for their citizens, and we save on the cost of building power stations.

[Majali] This statement is going to create problems for you with the electricity company's employees (some 8,000 employees who in their great majority are known to be Labor supporters).

[Peres] The law allows us now to import 10 percent of electricity, I mean the new law which was passed recently.

[Majali] Let us return to relations with the Gulf states.

[Peres] The states concerned are interested in our technological know-how. They are interested in selling us gas.

[Majali] Apart from Egyptian oil, has Israel started to use Arab gas or oil?

[Peres] No. We have not obtained it yet. A U.S. company is negotiating to sell us Qatari gas.

[Majali] Incidentally, how are relations with Qatar now?

[Peres] Fine. They are mutually beneficial.

[Majali] However, after operation "Grapes of Wrath" we saw signs of protest from Qatar, a chill in relations, and a Qatari minister visiting the Palestinian areas and Jerusalem, without going to Israel!

[Peres] This is understandable, but what can I do? No Israeli voter would be willing to vote for a defense minister who does not defend his country and respond to a military attack. You talk about the votes of Israeli Arab voters. If they were all to vote for me, they would not take me to power. The relations with the Arab Gulf states are important for us and an important contribution to the peace process.

[Majali] Did these relations not recede after the war?

[Peres] They did not. These states are also aware that Iran and fundamentalist terrorism are targeted at us all and at them too. Iran is openly threatening them. It is the main enemy to the Arab states' progress and not only Israel's.

[Majali] What about economic competition? Are you aware that some people are saying that one of the objectives of the "Grapes of Wrath" war was to hit Lebanon's economic capabilities and that, as Lebanon is primarily a tourist country which had started to breathe again and rebuild itself until the recent war, it is competing with Israel, and that is why you destroyed its infrastructure. Would you care to comment?

[Peres] This is nonsense. Listen, in the past three years, we have succeeded in doubling Israel domestic production. We did not export this production to the Arab world. Japan, the United States, and the European states are the ones buying from us.

[Majali] Are there any trade relations with Arab states?

[Peres] None at all.

[Majali] Only yesterday, the federation of manufacturers in the north said that 12 percent of their factories' production goes to Egypt and Jordan.

[Peres] Yes. This is, however, in Egypt's and Jordan's interest, and we buy oil from Egypt. Apart form us, does anyone else buy it? We are very good customers.

[Majali] Will you visit Tunisia soon, before the elections!

[Peres] No.

[Majali] Any other country?

[Peres] No. I do not think I will be able to travel anywhere at this time.

[Majali] But relations with Tunisia are progressing.

[Peres] Yes.

[Majali] There are obstacles on the Palestinian track.

[Peres] Why?

[Majali] No withdrawal from Hebron. The detainees have not been released.

[Peres] Everything was done in agreement with the Palestinian leadership.

[Majali] Can we say that the Palestinian leadership understands the difficulties that you are facing because of the election campaign?

[Peres] I am not the only one facing difficulties. They too have them. In Hebron, there are many Hamas militants. If only one operation is carried out, God forbid, it will be the end.

[Majali] The recent operation near Bet El was carried out despite Palestinian and Israeli security precautions. In your opinion, how did this happen?

[Peres] It did not succeed. That is why we are forced to impose the blockade and tighten it. Such operations harm the peace process. An operation from here or there could torpedo everything.

[Majali] Then all the remaining clauses of the Oslo agreement will be postponed.

[Peres] Yes.

[Majali] But the parties and active lists among the Arab voters in Israel have made specific demands in this context which look like a condition for electing you to head the government.

[Peres] Is this not an "electoral bribe"? Look, neither side wants that interpretation.

[Majali] The people at the top of the lists came out of the meeting with you talking about reviewing their previous position. Some of them have announced that they will urge the public to vote for you and others intend to leave it up to the voters' conscience. They are urging people not to vote for Netanyahu. What did you tell them? What did you promise them?

[Peres] Our government has accumulated enough good will. I reminded them that over the past years (three and a half years) we gave the Arab community in Israel as much as it had been given in 48 years. Between 1992 and 1996, the budget allocated to it increased by 170 percent, from 371 million shekel ($115 million) to 1 billion shekel ($310 million), while the grants doubled. I told them that this policy will continue until complete parity is achieved. I informed them that we have recognized an additional five Arab villages which were not recognized in the northern area, and will establish five to seven Arab villages in the Negev. I promised to examine the issue of buildings without permits (there are apparently 10,000 homes in the Negev threatened with demolition). I said that in the last two years, 661 Arab state employees, out of 2,030, have received permanent appointments. We appointed an Israeli Arab ambassador to Finland, and two consuls in Bombay (India) and San Francisco (United States). We approved the "al-Nasirah 2000" project and expanded the area of al-Nasirah by 1,600 donum at the expense of Tinsirt, Ablit, and Aymaq Yisra'il [names as transliterated] . We built 1,320 new classrooms.... (He gave us two more lists of other achievements [Majali note]). I told them that we have decided to treat Arab security prisoners resident in Israel in the same way as Jewish prisoners, and to reduce the period of incarceration by one-third for good behavior.

[Majali] These decisions exist already in the courts.

[Peres] Yes, but the state was opposed. With regard to the other demands, I said that we would examine them after the elections. Also, do not forget that we have started the negotiations on the final solution for the Palestinian issue.

[Majali] We have read the Labor Party's manifesto concerning this matter, and it does not bode well.

[Peres] This is a matter of negotiations. If everything was acceptable, why would we have negotiations?

[Majali] Did you feel that what you were saying was well received by the members of the Arab lists?

[Peres] I am waiting for their response.

[Majali] One of the issues which emerged after "Grapes of Wrath" is: Do you consider the Arab citizens in Israel to be part of the state, with a say in it?

[Peres] Of course, I consider them as such.

[Majali] You take them into account in all areas, just like the Jewish religious fanatics, for example?

[Peres] What kind of question is that?

[Majali] But you did not take their position and feelings into account with regard to the blockade and the war against Lebanon.

[Peres] I want to understand. What would the Arab citizen in Israel say if he sees that the defense minister is not defending him....

[Majali] Looking back, was everything that the government did, in these two matters and others, right? Was there not one error that deserves to be recognized as such?

[Peres] I believe that we had no alternative. We had to defend ourselves.

[Majali] Not even the Qana massacre?

[Peres] We said that what happened in Qana was not a deliberate mistake. Such things occur in war. Mistakes are always made in war.

[Majali] Do you understand the nationalist feelings of the Arab citizen in Israel?

[Peres] I also understand my own feelings. Like you, I am not happy about what happened in Qana. Do you think it is easy for me to see a dead child? The point is that we did not intend it that way.

[Majali] The UN report on this matter says something else.

[Peres] This report is inaccurate. It fails to make any mention of Hizballah, the main culprit in this operation. Is that fair?

[Majali] You have asked for a review of the task of the UN forces in Lebanon. What do you mean by that?

[Peres] We have lost confidence in them, and I believe they should leave. Nobody needs them. But this is a matter for the Lebanese. We are interested in peace with Lebanon and have no designs on it. We only want to end the war.

[Majali] You said that the Qana massacre was a mistake. Is there not somewhere to bring to trial whoever committed such a mistake?

[Peres] We have conducted an inquiry into this matter and found that it was not a deliberate mistake. Whom should we try?

[Majali] It was an internal military inquiry.

[Peres] Yes, but it was also serious and fair. There is no denying the facts. Six missiles were inadvertently launched outside the allocated limits. Look, the Arab voter in Israel must work out the right equation. There is a war between the forces of peace and those hostile to peace. This is not a personality issue, or whether to vote for me or Netanyahu. The vote must either be for peace or for ignoring the peace process. This is what we are all basically interested in. We, in this government, have covered a significant distance on the road to peace with the Palestinians, the PLO, and 'Arafat. We paid a high price. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was killed because of the peace and the peace process.

[Majali] Do you think that fascism exists in Israel?

[Peres] There are fascists, and there are also terrorists. We fight both sides.

[Majali] You are saying that Netanyahu will not make peace with Syria. Will you do it?

[Peres] We have taken some steps forward toward Syria and Lebanon. When there is peace with them, we will embark on a comprehensive peace with all the Arab world.

[Majali] What kind of peace will that be? To what extent do you agree with Syria's demands?

[Peres] I do not wish to talk about this subject.

[Majali] You took the initiative to freeze the peace negotiations with Syria. Will you take the initiative to resume them, and when?

[Peres] Me? Why?

[Majali] Because, at the time, Syria did not condemn the suicide operations in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. You announced that the negotiations would be frozen. Is that not so?

[Peres] No. I told them that day that if you want serious peace negotiations, you must raise the level of the negotiations to whoever can make decisions. I sent a message to Hafiz al-Asad, telling him: If you want peace between us in 1996, you must supervise the negotiations yourself. We did not feel like wasting time.

[Majali] The cease-fire agreement in Lebanon includes a clause concerning the resumption of negotiations with Syria.

[Peres] Indeed.

[Majali] Could the negotiations resume before the elections?

[Peres] It is possible, but I do not believe that Syria is interested in that before the elections.

[Majali] Is it now possible to conduct negotiations between you and President al-Asad directly?

[Peres] There is no alternative. The negotiations are not progressing. As you know, if al-Sadat himself had not participated, peace with Egypt would not have been achieved. Without 'Arafat's participation, it would not have been possible to reach a peace with the Palestinians.

[Majali] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has expressed his doubts that President al-Asad will push the peace process forward. Do you share this view?

[Peres] Al-Asad must participate in the negotiations.

[Majali] Must? Do you mean that he in fact will?

[Peres] Yes.

[Majali] Is this speculation or are you sure?

[Peres] The Americans have confirmed that he will participate.

[Majali] Last month, in the United States, you said that no U.S. Administration has been better than Clinton's as far as the Israelis are concerned. What are the U.S. decisions and measures which make you so enthusiastic?

[Peres] Its position on the fight against terrorism and its complete support for us in this context, and the strategic relations.

[Majali] Do you accept the French role?

[Peres] We do not oppose it.

[Majali] At the expense of the U.S. role?

[Peres] No, but in conjunction with the Americans.

[Majali] With everything that has happened over the past months, the war, the blockade, the extreme anger in the Arab world.... Do you still believe what you wrote about a new Middle East?

[Peres] Of course. On the contrary, I am more convinced of it [now]. If you recall, I gave the example of relations between European states. However, if I were to write it again, I would use Asia as an example, and not necessarily the advanced states in Europe. Even developing states now care about their economic interests. A poor state such as Islamic Indonesia has become a prosperous state. Why should this not be the case for the Middle Eastern states? I believe that the leaders are preoccupied with politics, but that the people are interested in the economy. In a world that is opening up to the media, you cannot hide the people's will or fight those who try to make the people prosper.

Israel: Likud Ad Alleges Peres-'Arafat Deal on Jerusalem

TA2005060896 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 20 May 96 p 1

[Report by Sarah Honig]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Likud prime ministerial candidate Binyamin Netanyahu said yesterday that he would not be obligated by deals on Jerusalem made between Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat — secret or otherwise — should he win the elections next week.

This is a departure from Netanyahu's line thus far that any elected government would be unable to ignore facts created by its predecessor.

Jerusalem, according to Netanyahu, would be an exception to the rule.

The Likud maintains, despite vehement denials from Labor, that secret talks on Jerusalem have been entered into and that there is a deal in the works with 'Arafat that will compromise the integrity of Israel's unequivocal sovereignty in Jerusalem.

The Likud's campaign broadcasts last night were led off by a hitherto unreleased video recording of 'Arafat addressing a near frenzied throng of 50,000 in Nabulus on December 15 and clearly speaking of a promise by the government of Israel regarding Jerusalem.

'Arafat is shown on the speaker's podium in Nabulus saying: "Brothers, this is the timetable upon which we have agreed with the Israeli government and it will happen as we had agreed: Gaza was first, then Janin, then Tulkarm, then Nabulus, then Qalqilyah, then Bethlehem, then Ramallah, then Hebron, and then holy Jerusalem."

The Likud last night demanded that Peres immediately disclose to the nation all the details of his dealings with 'Arafat on Jerusalem.

According to a Likud communique, "once more 'Arafat is revealing that which Peres seeks to conceal — his readiness to divide Jerusalem. Peres's denials now are as worthless as they were when he denied having given an undertaking not to tamper with PLO institutions in Jerusalem. Peres's denials were thoroughly disproved by the letter to the then-Norwegian foreign minister, which MK [Knesset Member] Beni Begin made public and in which Peres indeed made precisely that undertaking which he had so vigorously denied making. Peres's declarations on the unity of Jerusalem are nothing but campaign propaganda."

Israel: Netanyahu Says Not 'Bound' by Peres-'Arafat Accord on Jerusalem

TA1905183396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu said that if he is elected prime minister, he will not be bound by any agreement, either secret or public, reached between Shim'on Peres and Yasir 'Arafat on Jerusalem.

Replying to a question from our correspondent Dani Zaqen at the end of an election rally in Tel Aviv, Netanyahu said that he would not lend his hand to any compromise on Jerusalem.

Israel: Al-Darawishah Says Arabs Oppose Netanyahu in Elections

NC1905060796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0530 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 May (MENA)— 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Darawishah, leader of the Arab Democratic Party in Israel, has restated that the Arab voter will determine the next Israeli prime minister and the structure of the government coalition during the next elections on 29 May.

In an interview that appeared in AL-AHRAM's edition today, Sunday, al-Darawishah dismissed the dictum that the Arabs of Israel are not a part of Israeli society or Palestinian society. He added: We are at the heart of the battle, at the heart of the Palestinian issue, and at the heart of Israeli society. We also have influence and strength.

Al-Darawishah added that this was evident in the changes we made in Israeli policy during the 1992 elections. We succeeded in pushing the right and the Likud Party into the opposition. We will play a major role in the next elections because we are not on the sidelines of the political map.

Al-Darawishah denied reports that the leaders of the Arab minority in Israel have agreed to support the current prime minister in the next elections. He also denied that the Arabs' leaders have urged their supporters to vote in favor of Shim'on Peres. The leader of the Arab Democratic Party said: We have not made the decision yet concerning voting. The negotiations are still continuing within the unified Arab list.

Al-Darawishah said that the negotiations are expected to continue during the next few days. He maintained that the decision will be made only when we obtain our rights and demands and after we have been assured that Peres will continue the just peace process.

Answering a question, al-Darawishah said that Operation Grapes of Wrath has sparked Arab anger and has greatly deprived Peres of support within Arab society in Israel. However, we will do our best so that Binyamin Netanyahu, the representative of the fascist right, will not win the elections.

Israel: Peres on Iranian Nuclear Threat, Permanent Arrangement

TA1905133096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 May p A5

[Report by Amnon Barzilay]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Speaking at a convention of defense establishment pensioners at Tel Aviv's Dan Panorama Hotel, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said: "My worst nightmare is a gang of fanatics armed with nuclear weapons. The world must unite to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons."

The prime minister said that the arrest of terrorist Hasan Salamah was part of the struggle against the State of Israel in the context of the election campaign. "Speaking on the basis of intelligence reports, I can say that Iran is in the picture," Peres added. According to the prime minister, Iran's involvement was evident in two recent incidents: the terrorist who blew himself up in East Jerusalem and the espionage ring exposed abroad. [passage omitted]

Peres praised U.S. President Bill Clinton for his readiness to form an international coalition against fundamentalism but noted that Clinton was facing difficulties. "Clinton cannot convince all the European countries. A coalition capable of preventing Iran from arming itself has still not been formed."

In his speech, the prime minister also addressed the allegations made by the Likud in its televised election ads. As for the claim that he was rushing too fast with the peace process, the prime minister replied that the negotiations on the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians would take between 6 and 7 years. This, on top of a process that has already lasted three years. [passage omitted]

Approximately 1,200 defense establishment pensioners from the rank of colonel and above participated at the event, which was organized within the framework of Labor Party election activities. Among the participants were Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, and Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or.

Israel: 'Expert' Criticizes Arrow, Nautilus Effectiveness

TA1805131696 (Internet) IMRA News Service in English 18 May 96

[Interview with 'Uzi Sharon, "an expert on missiles and military lasers," by Dr. Aaron Lerner, Associate Director of Independent Media Review & Analysis (IMRA) on 15 May 96 — place not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IMRA: What are the prospects that the Arrow missile system will protect Israel from missile attack?

Sharon: Anti-ballistic missile systems just are not the answer. I worked on the Nike system in America years ago. The approach was basically abandoned because of practical considerations. In Israel the situation is even worse. It takes fourteen minutes for a missile launched in Iraq to hit Israel. This does not leave much time for a response. When you take into account the velocities involved, the many variables which effect trajectory, and the small size of the target — as small as a meter, the odds of consistently hitting the target are not good.

IMRA: What about costs? How does the cost of the anti-missile missile compare to the cost of the missile it is shooting down?

Sharon: The attacking missiles cost considerably less. And the difference is even greater when you consider that in order to insure a hit you would have to launch several missiles against each missile shot by the enemy. When you are talking about missiles designed to hit a tightly defined target, that is one thing. But if you want to use the missiles to terrorize the civilian population and release chemical material then even a small payload of 100 kilograms and an accuracy of 1,000 meters is acceptable and the missiles — including launching platform and everything around it — would cost around half a million dollars a unit.

IMRA: You say that it is difficult to hit a missile with a missile, but haven't there been demonstrations?

Sharon: Yes, but they hit from behind and not head on.

IMRA: What about the Nautilus laser program to destroy Katyushas with laser beams.

Sharon: When you take into account the beam spread and energy loss in the atmosphere you would need trillions of watts in order to stop a Katyusha with a laser. I just don't see it being workable.

IMRA: What about the proposal of putting anti-missile missiles on platforms which hover over enemy launch sites so that you can catch the missiles on their way up?

Sharon: That is assuming you can find the sites. Launch sites can be hidden and it is also possible to fool monitoring satellites.

IMRA: Then what is the solution to the missile threat?

Sharon: A good Air Force with good missiles and good reconnaissance.

IMRA: They can stop the missiles from coming in?

Sharon: No, but they can guarantee an effective response.

IMRA: Mutually assured destruction?

Sharon: Yes, MAD [Mutually Assured Destruction]. Just like the Americans had.

Jordan: Senior Officers Reportedly Object to Israeli Policy

JN1805140496 Damascus SANA in Arabic
0850 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 18 May (SANA)—The magazine AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI said that very important transfers were recently made in the Jordanian Armed Forces after many officers vocally objected to the Jordanian authorities' policy of rushing toward Israel.

In its new issue, AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI added that seven to ten senior officers were interrogated about their positions, which are considered a threat to Jordan's security, especially since most of these officers are among those most loyal to the royal palace.

Jordan: 'Responsible' Source Says U.S. Troops To Leave by 4 Jul

JN1905103396 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic
20 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible Jordanian source said that all American troops who took part in the Eager Tiger exercises will have left the Jordanian desert by 4 July. The Jordanian official said that as of 24 June 1996 the U.S. troops will start collecting their equipment. On 28 June, they will dismantle the tents and leave al-Azraq before they leave Jordan early July.

The Jordanian official said those dates are stipulated in the training agreement signed between the two countries. He denied reports about building U.S. bases in the Jordanian desert and about a permanent U.S. troop deployment in Jordan.

Jordan: IAF Urges U.S. To Open 'New Page' With Arabs, Muslims

JN2005110796 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic
20 May 96 p 27

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Action Front [IAF] deputies called on the speaker and members of the U.S. House of Representatives to open a new page with the Arab and Islamic world based on justice, mutual respect, and caring for people's interests.

In a message to the U.S. House of Representatives sent through the U.S. Embassy in Amman, the IAF deputies said that people do not forget and that relations between the Muslims and Arabs and the United States are more lasting, more deeply rooted, and greater than the relations between the United States and the Zionist usurpers of Palestine and other Arab countries.

The IAF deputies' message adds that when the United States insists on siding with injustice and aggression, it is ignoring more than 1.3-billion Arabs and Muslims. It is also ignoring American and Western interests in the region in order to win the U.S. Jewish vote, the message says.

The IAF deputies said that dialogue among countries achieves the common interests of these countries, noting that our region is vital and important to the Western world because of its resources.

The message notes that the Palestinian people, who are oppressed, displaced from their homes, coerced, and sentenced to death and arrests, have the right to defend their legitimate rights to their land, water, and holy places.

The IAF deputies called for releasing Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq as a step toward understanding based on justice and mutual interest.

Jordan: Arab Participation in Amman Three-Way Summit Welcomed

JN1905102196 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
19 May 96 p 24

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan welcomes the participation of any Arab country in the tripartite summit that will be held in Amman during the first week of June. The summit will bring together His Majesty King Husayn, His Excellency President Husni Mubarak of Egypt, and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

In an exclusive statement to AL-DUSTUR, he said that the political endeavor undertaken by His Majesty King Husayn aims to pave the way for restoring Arab solidarity and reviving joint Arab action in the current phase the region and the Arab arena are experiencing.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir explained that the Jordanian-Palestinian-Egyptian meeting is not parochial, citing his majesty the king's emphasis that this meeting does not represent an axis or alliance, but is rather meant to revive Arab coordination and support the peace process on all tracks.

Asked whether other Arab countries may join the summit scheduled to be held in Amman, al-Mu'ashshir said: So far, only Jordan, Egypt, and Palestine will attend the summit. We hope that the framework of coordination and meetings will expand in the future until we witness a return to the institution of the Arab summitry and a settlement of inter-Arab differences. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Buwayz—Draft of Supervision Committee Accord Ready

NC1705171396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has announced that the draft for an agreement on the supervision committee has been formulated. The draft will be presented to the meeting this afternoon in Washington. He said this draft has improved the proposals. Although it does not cover all points, it has reached a very progressive stage and improved a number of points regarding the mechanism and formation of the committee, and other things. [passage omitted].

Lebanon: Buwayz—Progress Made in Forming Monitoring Committee

NC1905124296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz at the Presidential Palace in Latakia this afternoon. Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' also attended the meeting.

Prior to his departure for Latakia, Buwayz reasserted the Lebanese constants regarding the monitoring committee. He noted that the committee's task is to monitor the situation on the borders and not to engage in in-depth political discussions. He pointed out that progress has been made on numerous points, but it remains to reach an agreement on rotation in chairing the committee meetings and the nature of a possible response to any incident. He said that he believes that the committee will be able to control a possible response to an incident until it can pinpoint responsibility. He said that Israel rejects having a 72-hour time period to enable the monitoring committee to take the necessary stand. He said that the committee should be mobile and effective and not overburdened with complicated mechanisms or have other goals.

Lebanon: Syria's al-Shar' Arrives, Leaves for Syria With Buwayz

NC1905122896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' arrived in Beirut at noon today aboard a private Syrian airliner. He was received by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. Both ministers then left for Latakia to meet with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and consult with him over the regional situation and the latest developments in the formation of the monitoring committee.

In a statement at the airport, Buwayz stressed that the April understanding was intended to keep civilians out of the conflict. He said that the mechanism for a solution is Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Buwayz Returns From Syria, Briefs al-Hirawi

NC1905195296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1915 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad met in Latakia with [Lebanese] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz in the presence of [Syrian Foreign] Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Talks dealt particularly with the formation of a monitoring committee stipulated in the April Understanding. The talks also dealt with the entire peace process and the obstacles facing it.

Jubran Kuriyah, spokesman for the Syrian presidency, said Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad received a message from [Lebanese] President Ilyas al-Hirawi. The message was conveyed by Minister Buwayz who also took back a message in reply. Kuriyah added that al-Asad was briefed by Buwayz on an assessment of the preliminary results of the meetings held by representatives of the monitoring group member countries in Washington, and that the Lebanese and Syrian sides have identical views on the issue.

The foreign minister returned to Beirut at 1930 [1630 GMT] on board a private Syrian plane accompanied by his Syrian counterpart Faruq al-Shar'. Buwayz went to the Presidential Palace, where he briefed President Ilyas al-Hirawi on his talks.

Lebanon: Iran's Khonsari on Bilateral Ties, Israeli Policy

NC1805134596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Kazem Khonsari met key figures in the north today. He met with Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of the [Islamic] Unification Movement; Deputy Fathi Yakan, head of the Islamic Group Deputies Bloc; and Shaykh Taha al-Sabunji, mufti of Tripoli and the north. Khonsari concluded his trip to the north with a meeting with [former] prime minister 'Umar Karami.

Our correspondent in the north Muhammad al-Hasan has the details.

[Begin recording] [al-Hasan] Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Kazem Khonsari has described recent media reports as fabrications aimed at causing confusion between the Lebanese Government and Iran as part of a plan to distance Lebanon from its friends.

Khonsari was speaking after a meeting with [former] prime minister 'Umar Karami in Tripoli. He concluded a tour during which he met with officials of the Islamic Unification Movement, the head of the Islamic Group Deputies Bloc, and the mufti of Tripoli and the north, Shaykh Taha al-Sabunji.

Khonsari noted the firm ties with officials in Tripoli and the north and the continuous exchange of views with them, describing Lebanese-Iranian ties as good and firm.

[Unidentified correspondent] How do you view the Lebanese Government's ties with Iran?

[Khonsari] They are good and firm and will grow stronger, God willing.

[Correspondent] Do you see attempts to undermine this harmony and good situation?

[Khonsari] Surely the Zionist enemy does not want a strong Lebanon. This enemy is trying to create problems, but Lebanon's awareness will frustrate all hostile attempts against Lebanon.

I think it is those who do not want a strong Lebanon and do not want to see sincere friends of Lebanon (?negotiating) on Lebanon's side who are disseminating these lies. It is my conviction that the Lebanese people and government know exactly who are their friends are, and who are not their friends.

[Al-Hasan] Khonsari attended a luncheon hosted in his honor by the Islamic Ulema Grouping in Tripoli.

This is Muhammad al-Hasan, Voice of Lebanon, Tripoli. [end recording]

Lebanon: Iranian Delegation Offers Reconstruction Aid

LD1805210596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A special delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran, headed by Mohammad Kazem Khonsari, adviser to the foreign minister and director-general in charge of the Arab Middle East and North Africa at the Foreign Ministry, met a gathering of political and religious Muslim and Christian personalities in the city of Tripoli in Lebanon on Saturday.

According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, at the meeting, Khonsari stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's support for the people and government of Lebanon, and said: The people of Lebanon have proved that the war machine of the Zionist regime is unable to break their resolve. He added: The Islamic Republic of Iran is willing to use all its resources to assist the reconstruction of all the areas damaged during the Zionist regime's attack on Lebanon.

Lebanon: Iranian Official on 'Very Friendly' Ties

LD2005100596 Tehran IRNA in English 0636 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, May 20, IRNA — Foreign Ministry Director General for Middle East and North Africa Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Kazem Khonsari here Sunday [19 May] described Tehran-Beirut relations as very friendly.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Khansari is currently in Lebanon to supervise Iran's aids for reconstruction of the country, damaged in savage attacks of the Zionist forces.

He told IRNA that Israel is concernced over close relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Lebanon and consequently it is doing all in its power to create schism between Lebanon and its friends.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Khonsari, speaking after meetings with Shaykh Sa'id Shaban, Omar Karami and several other Lebanese ulema and dignitaries, said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has put supporting the government and nation of Lebanon at top of agenda of its foreign policy.

Meanwhile, religious and political personalities of northern Lebanon, in a meeting with the Hojjat ol-Eslam, thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its stance towards the Lebanese and Palestinian people.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim on 'Resistance,' Iran

NC1805083096 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 10 May 96 p 4

[Interview with Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim by Wajdi al-'Aridi; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-'Aridi] After the violation of the "July understanding," could the "April understanding" be violated too, particularly since the reasons for and tools of the dispute still exist?

[Qasim] We could say that the similarities between the July and April understandings are clear in their main point, related to Israel's refraining from shelling civilians and our not firing Katyushas against civilians in Northern Palestine in reaction. As regards the part that talks on the right of self-defense, which we understand as a recognition of the resistance's right by those who accepted the understanding, it is a new and good development that was not explicitly included in the July understanding. The July understanding did not touch on the issue of the resistance. It kept the resistance completely neutralized and out of any understanding as long as the land is still occupied. The new thing here is the [monitoring] committee, which reflects the guarantees we have been calling for. This could prove to be more effective than before, because the international and regional involvement in the April understanding could serve as the biggest deterrence for the Israelis. Now the Israelis will have to think carefully and make more accurate calculations before committing any aggression. [passage omitted]

[Al-'Aridi] A number of Hizballah officials repeated that the resistance's right to expel the occupation still stands. Is Hizballah planning to step up its military activity following the April understanding and, consequently, are you planning to continue the martyrdom operations, particularly since the Hizballah secretary general has stated that you will retaliate for the Qana massacre?

[Qasim] The resistance is an act of confronting the Israeli enemy in the area it is occupying. This resistance is not restricted in any way. It is free to choose the methods it deems fit to kill his soldiers or destroy his military machines. This could be done by an explosive charge, a martyrdom operation, an ambush, or any other means available. Perhaps some people got confused when talk about the resistance coincided with talk about the need for neutralizing civilians. By neutralizing civilians we mean that the resistance will not fire shells or rockets from certain areas and that the Israelis will not fire at civilians. Thus, the equation of not striking at our civilians is in exchange for not hitting their civilians and not using our civilian areas to strike at their civilians. We proposed this equation to neutralize civilians. We did not propose it as a resistance equation. This means that our resistance method is not one of firing rockets at them, but one of ambush, destruction of the military machine, confronting soldiers, and martyrdom operations, and these will continue normally and in full. God willing, the coming days will witness resistance operations that will stand out and express themselves in a very normal way.

[Al-'Aridi] Had the Israeli military operations lasted longer, would you have developed your military tactics and diversified the use of weapons?

[Qasim] We mentioned that we had particular methods of action [khususiyat 'amalaniyah] that would have made the Israelis sustain more casualties had they thought of a land incursion or continued their aggression. However, these things remain within the scope of private military details that must not be revealed but exercised according to requirements and circumstances.

[Al-'Aridi] You have met with the president and we learned that you held an unpublicized meeting with Prime Minister al-Hariri. Is Hizballah in the process of continuing its exchanges with Prime Minister al-Hariri following the April understanding?

[Qasim] We had exchanges with Prime Minister al-Hariri, with whom we discussed and assessed some of the events that have taken place on the ground. We met with President al-Hirawi to congratulate him on his return. We discussed with him the current issues, including the Israeli aggression, its results, the cohesion that was demonstrated, the official position and that of the resistance, and the need to underscore the continued right of the resistance to face the U.S. scheme to separate Lebanon from Syria. All these issues were raised for discussion at the meeting and were debated with frankness and understanding.

[Al-'Aridi] Do you have any misgivings about any political party, particularly during the Israeli aggression?

[Qasim] We were generally satisfied with the regime's performance. The cohesion with the resistance in the face of aggression strengthened all parties, which all benefited from the unity demonstrated by the people, the state, and the resistance. We may have some observations on certain expressions or terms used, but overlooked them during the aggression because we thought they were marginal compared to the magnitude of the grave conspiracy. Thank God, we all managed to reap the fruits of cooperation by foiling the goals of the Israeli scheme with its April aggression.

[Al-'Aridi] It was clear that the tension between Hizballah and the Amal Movement had led to the Qana clash. Will there be a meeting with Amal soon to prevent a recurrence or a deterioration in the future?

[Qasim] We looked at the Qana incident as a passing summer cloud. Contacts were held quickly and the problem contained. There is a will to hold a meeting between Speaker Birri and his eminence the secretary general and other officials to treat the problems that might arise. We believe that the arena should stay cohesive and the brothers in the Amal Movement share the same view. What happened was a passing incident, which we hope will not recur or have repercussions. His eminence's meeting with Speaker Birri is usually positive.

[Al-'Aridi] There has been much talk lately about Hizballah's growing influence. The Iranian foreign minister said that Hizballah is a political party whose representatives at the parliament will grow in number in the future. How do you explain that?

[Qasim] No one denies that Hizballah grew bigger and more important after the April aggression. This is because of the model of national unity it stood for and the appeal it gave to the resistance, as well as the opportunity it gave all people to share in the fruits of victory; it did not monopolize that fruit. It gave credibility to the odds of obstructing the scheme of aggression that was cooked in Sharm al-Shaykh by the Americans and Israelis. All these are positive signs demonstrated by action rather than hollow words.

The Lebanese saw that Hizballah has credibility and the real will to sacrifice and respond to the people's needs. Therefore, they rallied around it and began to donate money to the Islamic Resistance, provide support, and shelter people. Every one who saw the confrontation and its results could see that the matter went beyond Lebanon to the entire world. There were unprecedented demonstrations to voice support in various countries of the world.

Each battle has its own product, which can be negative or positive. The product of the battle with the Israeli enemy was positive. The people supported Hizballah's work and its jihad. We used to hear or read in some Arab newspapers that Hizballah's name was associated with terrorism. This was not done during the aggression and the confrontation. There were even resonant sermons in Kaaba and various parts of the world that came as a surprise to all. These sermons voiced support for and solidarity with the mujahidin and the men resisting the Israeli aggression.

Hence, there were clear positive results that no one can deny. As for whether these results can reflect on the parliamentary or other elections, this is possible. The more support we get, the stronger our ability to represent the people. This does not mean that all we are doing we do for the parliamentary elections. It would be an understatement and an insult to us if this was the goal. Our goal is to liberate our land and confront the occupier and hence restore our dignity. But if observers believe that we will certainly win additional seats, this is possible and logical. We cannot deny that.

As for saying that Hizballah will become a political party, it is actually an ideological, political, and social resistance party. It is all that because it introduced itself to the arena, set out from an Islamic principle, and began to exercise an actual role at the domestic level and in the confrontation with the Israeli enemy.

Why does man fear the word "political" as though it was the substitute for jihad and other avenues? Politics means taking care of peoples' affairs. In that sense, we are a political party that takes care of peoples' affairs. In the same sense, we are a political party that fights to liberate the land. We serve the people, provide assistance to them, and act as an opposition for their sake. Hence, we absolutely do not understand "political" to be the substitute for resistance and jihad. Our action is integrated in the fullest sense of the word. Any party moving on the land exercises politic objectives. Nothing new has been invented and we are not being accused of something we deny. Our movement involves all these political, jihad, cultural, and other activities.

[Al-'Aridi] Is it possible that Hizballah will form an election list in the south?

[Qasim] We will wait until the date of elections comes and detailed discussions begin. We will then discuss the formation of an election list or participation in a list. We usually make our decision a short time before the date of elections.

[Al-'Aridi] Are there any alliances with other parties?

[Qasim] We have not yet decided on alliances with any party. In the past month, all efforts focused on confronting the aggression. Earlier, we were engaged discussing the election law. The appropriate time has not come to discuss alliances so that they will not be affected by the election law.

[Al-'Aridi] Speaker Birri said that at the beginning of the aggression "I can not speak with my mouth full." Do you think that he was annoyed by the growing stature of Hizballah? Are your ties with Birri good or not?

[Qasim] Relations with speaker Birri are good. If you want to question certain remarks he made, then you may ask him. We are not in a position to analyze what he concealed. Certainly, we pose no problem and there is cooperation with him and, God willing, this cooperation will yield fruit.

[Al-'Aridi] Certain people are annoyed by the Iranian role in Lebanon, in other words, there is talk about Iran's interference in Lebanon's domestic affairs. How would you reply?

[Qasim] Iran's role in Lebanon is one of a friend and it does not seek to confiscate the roles of others or to interfere in their affairs. Proof of this is that the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly declared that it supports the Islamic and national resistance to liberate the land from occupation. Should we be disturbed if a major country like the Islamic Republic of Iran supports our rights and offers aid to our people in their ordeal? Should we be disturbed because the Iranian foreign minister came to Lebanon during the aggression and during previous crises to share with other countries of the region and the world in supporting the resistance and the Lebanese people in confronting aggression? Are these bad deeds? On the contrary. These are excellent and acceptable deeds and we do not consider them an accusation but a source of pride. We are proud that we as a group in Lebanon and the Lebanese Government enjoy the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We also take pride in Syria's support and in the support of any country that helps us in our ordeal. I cannot help saying that I am surprised by the talk singling out the Islamic Republic of Iran. France comes to Lebanon with aid and initiatives, and so do the European countries, Russia, the United States, and all countries of the world, in which they try to offer something to Lebanon and to voice views that support or oppose us, or offer social services. We are not sensitive about this. These parties base all their justifications on the fact that Iran backs the poor in Lebanon or supports the resolutions that back Lebanon's independence. So welcome to Iran. We want Iran because it supports us. What is the Islamic Republic of Iran doing other than support us? Therefore, I consider the raising of these issues as an attempt to undermine us and Lebanon by seeking to withdraw a strong supporter from Lebanon. It is an attempt to deprive us of the assistance of a country of the stature of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is noted for its support of the oppressed and people's rights.

Lebanon: Nasrallah Denies Party Works for Iran, Targets Civilians

NC1805101796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0912 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 May (MENA)—Hizballah Leader in Lebanon Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah has denied that Hizballah is an Iranian party or acts to serve Iranian interests. He emphasized that Hizballah does not target Israeli civilians, but targets the Israeli occupiers in the occupied border strip. In a statement to the weekly newspaper AKHBAR AL-YAWM published today, he said that those who accuse Hizballah of being an Iranian party do not have any evidence. Hizballah is a Lebanese party, its leadership is Lebanese, and its ideology is not Iranian but Islamic, he said, and added that the priority of our Islamic movement in Lebanon is to resist the occupation.

Responding to a question about recent reports on the presence of Hizballah military bases or training camps in Africa, Latin American, or certain European countries, Nasrallah said a denial was released by Hizballah and the governments involved, such as South Africa, Nigeria, France, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. He said that the matter is not merely a denial of responsibility, because we feel that the Israelis circulate such reports to prepare world public opinion to hold us responsible for any action that might target Israeli interests. Nasrallah said that he holds the Israelis, in advance, responsible for any strike that the Mosad may deal to an Israeli civilian target abroad to cover up the Qana massacre and dissipate its repercussions, which have besieged Israel on the international level and distorted the image of Shim'on Peres and the Israeli Labor Party. He wondered what would prevent the Mosad from killing Jews somewhere in the world and holding Hizballah responsible to balance the Qana massacre? He said: "Yes, we vowed to avenge our martyrs, but we will take revenge on the Israeli occupation soldiers in the occupied border strip. We have nothing to do with civilian tourists anywhere in the world.

Nasrallah said that certain people believe that the Islamic Resistance's retaliation by firing Katyusha rockets at north Palestine led to the latest war. However, they ignore that Israel killed Lebanese civilians in more than one Lebanese village last month and that the Resistance had no other option but to retaliate by firing Katyusha rockets to deter the Israelis from continuing their aggression against civilians. He added: In fact, they were waiting for any military operation against Israeli soldiers in the occupied border strip to launch this major aggression, which had nothing to do with Katyusha firing, in order to end the Islamic Resistance Movement in Lebanon and to complete negotiations on other tracks and impose on Lebanon and Syria capitulation to the Israeli conditions. The Israelis, he said, imagined that their aggression could end the resistance and isolate Lebanon from Syria and drag it to a separate reconciliation and, subsequently, besiege Syria.

Responding to a question on whether the April understanding restricts the resistance movement in Lebanon, Nasrallah said that the agreement does not restrict the resistance movement on Lebanese territory. It allows for operations on Lebanese territory against the Israeli occupation forces and it does not allow the Israelis to retaliate for our operations by shelling civilians, which is a big achievement for the Lebanese people and the resistance.

Lebanon: Nasrallah on Hizballah Policy, 'Resistance'

NC1805123696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Speaking at a meeting to mark the 'Ashura' [Islamic] anniversary, Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah emphasized that, even it were alone in its struggle, Hizballah could not tolerate humiliation, oppression, injustice, or recognition [of Israel].

He noted the July [1993] understanding, in which the resistance was able to impose the equation of katyusha on the enemy and subjugate and subdue him with this equation during his recent aggression in April, as Nasrallah put it.

Deputy Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid criticized those who speak the language of defeat at the time of victory. He criticized those who insisted on remaining small or vanquished and who omitted the resistance, not by mistake or negligence, but in the context of a distinct policy before and after Qana. A policy, he remarked, of keeping the resistance apart and showing dissatisfaction with it.

Deputy al-Sayyid was speaking at a ceremony organized by the Faithful Resistance, marking the second anniversary of the abduction of Mustafa al-Dirani in the village of (kafr Naba).

Lebanon: Israeli Shelling of Southern Areas Reported

NC1805081396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli occupation troops have been shelling the woods of Sujud, al-Rayhan, al-Jabal al-Rafi', al-Jabal al-Akhdar, Mazra'at 'Uqmata since 0915 [0615 GMT] this morning. The source of the shelling is al-Zaffatah.

Lebanon: Hizballah Attacks SLA Patrol in South

NC1805172196 Paris AFP in English 1616 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MARJ 'UYUN, May 18 (AFP) — Iranian-backed Hizballah guerrillas Saturday claimed an attack against a patrol by the South Lebanon Army (SLA, Israel's proxy militia) in the border zone occupied by the Jewish state in south Lebanon.

The armed wing of Hizballah, the Islamic Resistance, said in a statement from Beirut that their commandos exploded a device in the path of an SLA patrol on the edge of the central sector of the border zone between al-Jarmaq and al-'Ayshiyah, "claiming several victims."

An SLA source confirmed the attack, but said the patrol suffered no casualties.

Lebanese police said artillery shells were fired in retaliation from the occupied zone towards the hills opposite the site of the ambush and towards the Hizballah stronghold of the mountainous Iqlim al-Tuffah in south Lebanon. They gave no details of casualties.

The Shiite fundamentalist Hizballah, which since 1985 has led resistance against the "security zone" occupied by Israel in south Lebanon, has carried out a string of minor attacks since last Sunday [12 May] — wounding six Israeli soldiers.

On Tuesday [14 May] a Hizballah fighter was killed during an attack on the zone, and his body was handed over two days later to members of the United Nations Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

The skirmishes do not represent a breach of the US-brokered ceasefire which ended Israel's 17-day offensive against the Hizballah on April 27.

Under the terms both sides pledged not to attack civilians, but Hizballah is free to target the Israeli military inside the occupied zone in south Lebanon and the Jewish state has the right to self- defense.

Lebanon: Israeli Troops Kills 'Terrorist' in South

NC1905072696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0700 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our military correspondent reports that the Israeli army killed a terrorist near Qal'at Arnun this morning. There have been no details on the circumstances of the incident.

Lebanon: IDF Soldier Wounded; 'Terrorist' Killed in Security Zone

TA1905082696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier was moderately wounded in a clash with a terrorist squad in the south Lebanese security zone. Our correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e reports that IDF artillery fired at the terrorist squad as soon as it was spotted in the Beaufort area early this morning, and at dawn an IDF detail attacked the squad, killing one terrorist.

An IDF scout who sustained moderate injuries was flown by helicopter to Haifa's Rambam Hospital. Our correspondent Haviva Roger adds that the soldier had a CT scan, and will later undergo abdominal surgery.

Lebanon: Israeli Patrol Attacked in South; Casualties Reported

NC1905093396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance has announced that one of its groups ambushed an Israeli mechanized patrol on the road leading to Qal'at al-Shaqif this morning. The resistance fighters attacked the patrol with machine guns and rockets. The patrol personnel were either killed or wounded.

Meanwhile, the pro-Israel agent militia [South Lebanese Army] said that two Hizballah fighters were killed during a clash with the occupation forces in the south today.

Lebanon: Hizballah Figure Says Israeli Attacks 'Violation' of Accord

NC1905123496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The resistance has announced that its fighters this morning attacked an Israeli patrol heading for Arnun from Qal'at al-Shaqif, wounding a number of the patrol members, according to a statement by the resistance.

Following the incident, the Israeli troops stationed in Qal'at al-Shaqif shelled the Hima Arnun area. Citizen Nawal 'Ali Basal was wounded as a result. The shelling also included Kafr Tibnit and Mazra'at al-Hamra'.

Shaykh Nabil Qawuq, Hizballah official in charge of the south, has termed Israel's aggressions against residential areas as a clear violation of the spirit and letter of the April understanding, which stressed the need to keep civilians out of the fighting. He called on the government to act swiftly to lodge a complaint and open an inquiry into the incident.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim—Israel Violated April Understanding

NC1905185496 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 May 96

[Telephone interview with Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim, in Lebanon, by MBC moderator Nicole Tannuri, in London—live or recorded]

[Tannuri] Shaykh Na'im, Israel says that the agreement was violated by Hizballah. Your comment?

[Qasim] All the television clips clearly prove that the aggression was launched by the Israelis against the village of Kafr Tibnit in the south. A house was hit and a Lebanese woman was wounded and taken to hospital. I think the television clips cannot be refuted, whereas Hizballah confronted an Israeli patrol. This is an indivisible part of the right to resist that is recognized even in the April understanding.

[Tannuri] How would you respond to this violation: diplomatically or militarily?

[Qasim] Acording to the April understanding, we are committed to the principle of lodging a complaint. The Lebanese government must lodge a complaint with the monitoring committee. We will wait and see the result and decide what to do accordingly. There will be no direct reaction because the understanding provides a mechanism for lodging a complaint to which we are committed.

[Tannuri] This escalation of the situation comes at a time when the monitoring committee is close to carrying out its tasks. What is the effect of today's incident on the committee's work?

[Qasim] It is supposed that efforts must be expedited to form this committee, because the complaint cannot be lodged except through this committee. I think the Israeli stalling is meant to simply mark time until the Israeli elections. The Israelis are facing a major impasse as a result of the April understanding, which rendered them defeated in a battle they had hoped would alter the July understanding. Thus, we consider that the Israelis are stalling — so pressure must be applied to form the committee and stop the Israeli aggression that has violated the April understanding.

Lebanon: Editor Criticizes Iranian 'Interference'

NC1705193596 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 13 May 96 p 3

[Article by Chief Editor Hasan Sabra: "What Is This Iranian Interference In Lebanon's Affairs?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] No independent country has ever experienced a situation similar to that posed by the picture of Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri receiving Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah in the presence of Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon Homayun 'Alizadeh.

One may find a similar picture in newspaper archives — a picture of a military ruler or a high commissioner of an occupied country publicly mediating between an official nominally appointed in a nominal establishment and another figure affiliated with this ruler or commissioner, a mediation through which the ruler shows hegemony over the two sides as well as over the country itself. But to see this picture now in Lebanon, with one of the parties being the head of the legislative power in this country, is very strange indeed. What is more surprising, however, is that the masters of law in the Chamber of Deputies—who in order to satisfy their lust for television appearances and media statements, leave no issue, worthless or worthwhile, ridiculous or reasonable, without an opinion on it—have remained silent on this matter. We saw none of them on any television screen, we heard none of them behind any radio microphone, and we read no statement by any of them in a newspaper or a magazine.

But the issue is Iran's insistence on playing a role in Lebanon that is incompatible with the nature of diplomatic relations between two supposedly independent countries, with the principles governing ambassadorial conduct and statements and the need for ambassadors to abide by the laws of the country. Nor is it compatible with the role of our legislative branch, which is entrusted with preserving Lebanese sovereignty and enforcing the law and the Constitution.

And what is strange is that the chief Iranian diplomat, the polite pediatrician 'Ali Akbar Velayati, departed from all these norms when he announced, in a political statement, that Hizballah will win the largest possible number of seats in the next elections to the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

Thus, a foreign minister—Velayati—of a foreign country—Iran— is usurping the right of the Lebanese, all Lebanese, to a free and open election by saying that his party in Lebanon will win a landslide in the upcoming elections.

The first comment on this departure from diplomatic norms can be addressed to the one called the spiritual guide of Lebanon's Hizballah [Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah]. In a radio interview in which he defended President Ilyas al-Hirawi and severely attacked Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, he said that Hizballah will not use the battle it is waging in southern Lebanon for domestic purposes. But Velayati is saying the opposite. We are not interested in who has more influence on Hizballah's decisions, Fadlallah or the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

A more important thing is this: If Hizballah in Lebanon is moving toward Lebanization with the blessing, guidance, and support of its spiritual guide after ascertaining that it cannot have political protection in this country except by belonging to it — and this is proof of Fadlallah's good guidance — then why does it allow the foreign minister of a country called Iran to speak on its behalf? Another question for Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah: How can a meeting between you and the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, attended by eight deputies from your party plus other deputies from your bloc, only be held through the offices of the ambassador of a foreign country—a country called Iran—and by its ambassador, Homayun 'Alizadeh, with his intervention and his shuttle mediation?

Hizballah says that its religious frame of reference is also political. This is the same as the Iranian theory on the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme juriconsult]. But there is a glaring contradiction in this motto and no one can tolerate its duality. Either Hizballah is Lebanese in blood, flesh, views, writings, and compliance with the spirit and letter of Lebanese laws, legislation, and stands; or in accordance with its ideological commitment under the banner of which everyone knows it is fighting, it is Iranian and takes as its highest frame of reference 'Ali Khamene'i and not Ilyas al-Hirawi, the president of Lebanon—a Lebanon whose laws they do not obey. Or at best, if there is a conflict between Lebanon's laws, interests, and the creed of dedication to the Lebanese homeland and Iran's laws, interests, and the creed of dedication to the political creed of the faqih, then Hizballah inevitably opts for Iran. Read all the ideological creeds and the political and executive programs of Hizballah and its conferences and you can see that this party does definitely looks toward Iran and not Lebanon.

Yes, we do call on Hizballah to Lebanize itself. This is one of the aspects of Arabism whose language is that of the Koran and was spoken by the Prophet, his companions, the orthodox caliphs, and the imams who were well versed in this great language. We also encourage it to choose this road without hesitation and to boast of its Arabism and Lebanese affiliation in the same way that it underlines its affiliation with Iranian Islam.

If only it had advised Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati to speak to the Lebanese in Arabic instead of English, which he used at a time when Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk took care to speak the language of the Holy Koran to the Lebanese and at the same place and on the same occasion!

Syria: Al-Asad Receives Lebanon's Buwayz, Reviews Washington Talks

JN1905204996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz at Latakia Palace at 1315 today. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Buwayz conveyed a message to the president from Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi dealing with talks among the ambassadors of the monitoring committee stipulated in the April Understanding of 1996. The president asked him to carry a reply message.

The president was also briefed on an assessment of the preliminary results of the meetings held by the representatives of the monitoring group member countries in Washington. He was told that the two sides had identical views on the issue.

Syria: Radio—Washington Talks Not Substitute for Peace Talks

JN1905155596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1145 GMT 19 May 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Peace that Syria seeks to realize in the region is not its own peace, but it is peace that is aspired to by the peoples of the region and even the international community because it is not based on passing and temporary circumstances, but on solid grounds, the most important of which is the respect for the rights of the peoples and securing their interests and dignity on the basis of implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Syria based its sincere efforts toward the aspired peace on the principles of emphasizing national unity, building of the human being, and unleashing his capabilities, in addition to constant efforts toward creating a healthy atmosphere for joint Arab action, and unifying Arab efforts to realize the possible degree of solidarity and unity of ranks. Syria's position was also based on basic principles to which it adhered — namely, the implementation of the international resolutions that guarantee the rights of all parties and the principle of real peace, and confronting the Israeli aggression and rejecting all malicious and deceptive methods which aim at keeping the occupied territories and controlling more resources.

Based on these clear constants and principles, Syria has been able to address the international public and convey the true picture of what is going on. Syria has also been able to show the international public the party who obstructs the just and comprehensive peace that was called for by the Madrid conference and the U.S. initiative, which were based on the Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. These resolutions call for the return of the occupied Arab territories to their legitimate owners and lay down the foundations for establishing balanced [mutawazinah] and equitable [mutakafi'ah] relations in which there is no room for injustice or undermining of rights and sovereignty since Israel continues to evade implementation of UN resolutions, and consequently meeting the requirements of a just peace.

Developments have proven that the Israeli Governments since the Madrid conference have not abandoned an aggressive policy and a mentality which deals with the Middle East as an area whose resources should be looted and the destinies of its peoples should be controlled. The obstruction of the Syrian track by the Shim'on Peres government; its actions in the occupied territories in terms of closure, starvation, and arrest campaigns; and its positions at the ongoing Washington talks on the April understanding that stopped the Israeli aggression against Lebanon provide new evidence that this government—like its predecessors—has not done anything that proves a serious commitment to a real peace which leads to security and stability for the region and its peoples.

The recent brutal aggression against Lebanon and the massacring of women, children, unarmed Lebanese, and even those at the international forces' position are signs of Israel's defiance of international legitimacy and its resolutions, and the peace process and its requirements.

The current Israeli Government used deceptive methods to tear down the real bases of peace through its efforts to give the illusion that it is a peace government and that it learned from past mistakes. It succeeded in confusing some parties of their real intentions and it succeeded in deceiving others. However, all masks fell after the massacres in Qana, al-Nabatiyah, and all over Lebanon—massacres that have been condemned by the international community. Israel now returns to the policy of maneuvering at the Washington talks, which it wants to be a substitute for peace talks and a justification and cover for resuming its aggression against Lebanon whenever it wants and without any deterrence.

The United States knows more than any other party that the current Washington talks are not a substitute for the peace talks or for the implementation of Resolution 425, which calls for Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. These talks are also not a substitute for the implementation of Resolutions 242 and 338. The real implementation of these resolutions means eliminating factors of tension and threat, and consequently ensuring the security of all parties.

The serious events that have taken place in the region require the U.S. sponsor of the peace process now, more than ever, to fully play its role as a sponsor and partner. It must do this to preserve U.S. credibility and to attain the just and comprehensive peace sought by the international community and the peoples of the region. This requires forcing Israel to respect the UN resolutions by returning the occupied territories to their owners as a necessary prelude to realizing just peace. A just peace is the only way to guarantee security and stability for this region and its peoples.

Syria: Press on Israel's Preelection 'Hysterical Campaign'

JN1905090696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 19 May 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] TISHRIN comments on the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territories as a result of the Israeli siege on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The paper says: Developments show that tension and agitation are increasing as the 29 May Israeli elections draw nearer. Security has dominated the election campaigns of Israeli parties, forces, and movements. In addition, one-upmanship has increased between the two major parties vying for power at the expense of Arab rights, land, and citizens.

TISHRIN says: Under the pretext of guaranteeing Israeli security, Peres and Netanyahu are in a competition to suppress the Palestinians. In addition, the self-rule authority did not protest tightening the Israeli siege on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Acting on Israeli orders, this authority endorsed the closure and agreed to turn the self-rule region into a military zone until further notice. This will allow the Israeli forces to demolish homes, pursue suspects who oppose the Oslo agreement, storm Palestinian universities, and launch a wide-scale arrest campaign.

The newspaper adds: All of this is happening, and more will come, on the pretext of calming the situation and guaranteeing Israeli security to make the elections succeed. These actions bear the seeds of explosion, because it is unreasonable for Israel to carry out a hysterical, terrorist, suppressive, and vindictive campaign against the sons of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, their rights, and life only to counter alleged operations against the occupation. Is it not possible to hold Israeli elections without terrorism, killing, siege, storming campaigns, arrests, and deportations against Palestinian citizens, and murders and massacres against Lebanon?

TISHRIN concludes: Israel's adherence to the pretext of security is an exposed and familiar policy. Israel does not need any pretexts or elections to reveal its grudges against the Palestinian or Lebanese citizens, unless Peres thinks that shedding Arab blood in this terrorist and fascist manner is the road to reassume power over the remains of Arab victims.

On the same issue, AL-THAWRAH says: The decisions made by the Arab Parliamentary Union [APU], which concluded its meetings on 17 May, represent a sincere attempt to prod the Arab nation and masses into action by facing the challenges and great, imminent dangers, from a position of strength. Implementing these decisions will revive joint Arab action, reactivate its institutions, and reestablish Arab solidarity on a solid foundation. This can be done by mobilizing all resources to serve the nation's battles, raising the Arab voice, achieving a just and comprehensive peace, and deterring the Israeli aggression, which manifests itself in occupation, oppression, usurpation, demolition, deportation, and mad racist killing.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that solidarity and unity are the best weapons. Syria emphasized this and President Hafiz al-Asad, the great leader of the Arab nation, reasserted this to the Arab parliamentarians taking part in the APU's 27th session. Solidarity and unity can be achieved by giving precedence to the nation's pan-Arab causes over less important differences and rising above the wounds. This is in the interest of all the Arabs. President al-Asad stressed that our nation is alive and can defend its existence. The nation will defeat the current difficult circumstances.

Under the headline "The Nation's Interest," AL-THAWRAH says: Fully confident of himself, the people and the nation, President Hafiz al-Asad emphasized his belief that our nation will overcome the current difficulties and achieve victory.

The paper adds: During his meeting with the APU delegation, President al-Asad said he is confident that the Arab nation is alive and can defend its existence, despite all difficulties. This is a profound historic vision that reflects love for the nation, sincerity towards its crucial issues, and loyalty to a dignified future.

AL-THAWRAH points out that since the beginning of international and regional changes, Syria has repeatedly warned of the dangers of Arab relaxation and of the effects of marginal Arab differences. Syria also warned of the consequences of immersion in projects planned for the region. These projects are being peddled gradually under the banners of peace, cooperation, and bilateral and trilateral regional alliances. The Israeli projects that followed the unilateral peace agreements in Oslo and

Wadi al-'Arabah confirmed Syria's farsightedness and its sound understanding of Israel's plans.

The paper concludes: Syria's pan-Arab feelings make it realize that submitting to the enemy is a serious mistake. Syria warned that surrendering to the logic of Israeli projects will be a prelude to a long absence of pan-Arab action. This is why Syria cautioned that fragmentation and disunity are Israel's main gateway to achieve its objectives. There is a need for a quick remedy of the Arab situation to rid it of any impurities as a result of accumulated differences. The Arabs should launch a new stage of joint Arab action and build strong solidarity to face all challenges. As President Hafiz al-Asad told Arab parliamentarians, the interest of the Arabs lies in giving precedence to the nation's causes over less important differences among Arab countries.

Syria: Press Highlights APU Resolutions, Meeting in Lebanon

JN1805115896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0458 GMT 18 May 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, TISHRIN calls on the Arabs to adopt a unified pan-Arab position proceeding from the responsibilities dictated by the nature of the current phase experienced by the Arab nation. It says: All Arabs must give pan-Arab interests precedence over all other interests and differences, for the posed dangers will not spare any Arab.

TISHRIN stresses that Syria will continue to carry the honor of leading the calls for a unified Arab position and effective Arab solidarity based on restoring Arab rights and territories and confronting the Israeli penetrations seeking to impose hegemony on the Arab nation and control our land, wealth, and resources.

TISHRIN notes that warning against the evil, hostile Israeli schemes that aim to fragment the Arabs and deal with each Arab party in isolation from others is a necessary first step to confront the dangers entailed by the Israeli goals. Arab solidarity is the sharpest weapon to confront the posed dangers and challenges. Consequently, Syria will tirelessly warn against the results of the absence of effective solidarity among the Arabs. Syria will tirelessly call for reviving and bolstering Arab solidarity and finding a strategic comprehensive pan-Arab vision that rectifies and restores balance to the Arab situation.

TISHRIN reiterates President Hafiz al-Asad's assertion that we all must always try to achieve inter-Arab solidarity because the conflict with Israel is an Arab-Israeli conflict in essence and in principle, rather than a conflict between a certain Arab country and Israel.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Undoubtedly, this comprehensive pan-Arab view means that Syria will remain faithful to its vanguard and honorable stands. It will continue to call for Arab solidarity to protect the present and future and to guarantee peace.

In an article, AL-THAWRAH says that the decision to hold the final session of the Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] Council in Qana, southern Lebanon, in the presence of Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi was meant to show support for Lebanon in its confrontation against the Israeli occupiers' ambitions and aggressiveness. It was held there in honor of the martyrs of Lebanon and to emphasize the Lebanese people's right to resist the Israeli occupation.

AL-THAWRAH says that the APU Council not only held its final session in Qana, but also issued a special resolution on Lebanon in which it denounced the repeated Israeli attacks on Lebanon, particularly the latest treacherous aggression and its accompanying massacres against innocent civilians. The council strongly denounced Israel's brutal massacre against civilians who took shelter at the UN center in Qana.

AL-THAWRAH indicates that by voicing support for Syria's struggle to liberate the occupied Golan and for the steadfastness of the Golan population as they resist the occupation and adhere to their identity, the APU Council voiced its adherence to the bases of a just, comprehensive peace. The APU Council regarded the Knesset decision to annex the Golan null and void, urged the international community to support and bolster the Middle East peace process, and demanded Israel's full withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

AL-THAWRAH says: The APU resolutions and recommendations, especially those related Arab solidarity and enhancing it, regard this solidarity as the only and most effective way to overcome the difficult circumstances experienced by the Arab nation and confront the challenges resulting from Israel's aggressiveness and refusal to comply with the principles of international legitimacy and UN resolutions, which are necessary to find a just, comprehensive resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine question.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH stresses President Hafiz al-Asad's words during his reception of an APU Council delegation on 16 May. In that meeting, he said that it is in the interest of all Arabs to give the Arab nation's pan-Arab interests precedence over less important differences among Arab countries. His excellency also emphasized his faith that our nation will overcome the current circumstances and will triumph.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Meets With Pakistani Delegation

LD1805150496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Hekmatyar, mojahed emir of the Hezb-e Eslami, has met Qazi Hassain Ahmad, leader of Pakistan's Jam'iyat-e Eslami party, and his accompanying delegation.

A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reported from Jalalabad City that on 17 May, Brother Hekmatyar held talks with Qazi Hussain Ahmad and his accompanying delegation in the headquarters of Nangarhar's Army Corps No 1. [passage omitted]

At this meeting subjects of mutual interest were discussed.

Afghanistan: Kabul Protests to Tajikistan Over Bombing in North

LD1905191696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Protest note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA] in connection with the recent bombing incident in Badakhshan Province:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ISA regretfully informs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan that on the basis of reliable information supplied by the responsible sources in the country, unidentified planes, after conducting maneuvers across the border in Tajikistan, violated the air space of the ISA and savagely bombed two villages in the districts of Baharak and Khas in Badakhshan Province on Thursday evening, 27 Sawr 1375 [16 May 1996].

As a result of this blatant violation, two men, a woman, and a child were martyred and eight other residents of the villages were seriously injured; two houses were partially damaged; 34 head of livestock were killed; and a number of orchards were damaged. [passage indistinct]

Despite the Afghan side's cordial desire for the expansion and consolidation of relations between the two brotherly and Muslim countries and for respect for border [passage indistinct] and despite the emphasis it puts on the principles of good neighborly relations and noninterference in the internal affairs of others, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ISA considers such stealthy acts by the unidentified airplanes — which most probably belong to the Russian forces based along the border of the two countries — as being against all principles of friendship and all accepted norms of international law, and hereby expresses its protest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan and demands from the authorities of the (?government of Tajikistan] that it shall refrain from the repetition of such incidents, which will seriously damage the friendly and stable relations between our friendly and brotherly countries, and shall contribute to the reduction of regional problems and the restoration of peace and stability.

Afghanistan: Taleban Hangs Commander for Cooperating With Government

LD2005084196 Tehran IRNA in English 0702 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, May 20, IRNA — The Taleban has executed one of its commanders, Mulla Abdur-Rahman, in Wardag Province, on charges of establishing contacts and cooperation with the Afghan Government.

An Afghan Government source said here Sunday night that following the Taleban's recent defeats in the province, the group has turned to execution of its opponents on charges of cooperating with the government.

At least seven persons were hanged in the province during the last week, three of whom [were] staff of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, he said adding their bodies were put at public display.

The source said that the Taleban had previously executed batches of their opponents in Herat and Farrah provinces.

Fierce battles broke out between the Taleban and the joint forces of the government and Islamic Party of Golboddin Hekmatyar in the past ten days in Deymirdad and Ceck areas, deep inside the Taleban controlled territories.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rocket Attack Kills 6 Civilians in Kabul

BK1805112496 Hong Kong AFP in English 1122 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Kabul, May 18 (AFP) — Six civilians, including two children, have been killed and 18 injured in two rocket attacks by the Taleban militia, hospital and defence sources said Saturday

Three of the victims died instantly when a Soviet-built rocket hit a crowded Kabul bus shelter, near the densely populated Microryan housing estate late Friday, while two others died later in hospital, doctors said.

"About 25 people were standing in and around the shelter when there was an enormous explosion right in front of them," Mohammed Sharif, a fruit salesmen who works nearby told AFP.

"It was terrible because when the smoke cleared, I saw the bodies of two young children lying in the gutter with their heads blown off, while there were wounded people everywhere," he added.

A total of 18 people were injured when the single rocket struck the besieged Afghan capital, including children playing in the area, bus passengers and fruit vendors, doctors and witnesses said.

In a separate incident, a man living in a village near the frontlines in southern Kabul died when his home was struck by a shell later Friday, hospital sources said.

Defence officials here said the Taleban, who have dug in on three fronts around Kabul, carried out the attack. No independent confirmation of who was responsible was immediately available here. [passage omitted]

Friday's attack came just four days after troops of the former opposition Hezb-e Eslami faction arrived in Kabul vowing to fight alongside the government in any attack against the Taleban.

The alliance between the former arch enemies is aimed both at broadening the ethnic and political base of the recognition-hungry Kabul government and at creating a united front against the Taleban, analysts here said.

The government however insists the alliance is aimed at creating a peaceful environment here after four years of bloody civil war, and not at routing the Taleban.

Afghanistan: Unidentified Planes Bomb Badakhshan Villages 18 May

LD1805152796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On 16 May unidentified planes bombarded three villages in Baharak and Khash districts, Badakhshan Povince.

(?BAKHTAR) reported that these aircraft dropped 28 bombs on Qaraqura and Shashpol villages, Baharak District, and the village of [name indistinct]. As a result of the bombardments, two men, one woman, and a child were killed and another eight persons were injured. Two houses were completely destroyed and another 12 sustained damage.

As a result of the bombardments, 34 animals were destroyed and a number of orchards sustained damage.

The identity of the invading planes is not known. Two years ago the areas in the north of Badakhshan Province were bombarded several times [words indistinct] which caused heavy human and material losses.

Afghanistan: Government Starts 'Guerrilla Attacks' in Herat

LD1905202796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in the Afghan Government said on 19 May that after capturing and stationing government forces in Pashtun Zarghun District, east of Herat, guerrilla attacks by government forces had started by infiltration into Herat City. According to a report by the Central News Unit from Kabul, a government official said on 19 May that the Taleban, who were trying to oust the government forces from Pashtun Zarghun District, had been defeated, and had left the area.

Afghanistan: Missiles Hit Kabul as Joint Forces Attack Taleban Positions

LD2005105196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, was hit by missiles this morning and, according to the Central News Unit from Kabul, initial reports indicate that the missile attacks on residential areas in the center, north, and east of the city left six people dead and 18 others injured. Sources at the Afghan Defense Ministry said the Taleban group was responsible for the attack.

Another report indicates that the forces loyal to the government and the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] have started joint operations against Taleban forces in the northern areas of Lowgar Province and have managed to capture Mesinak southeast of Kabul and continue their advance toward the south.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Troops 'on Full Alert' Following Military Shakeup

BK2005104996 Hong Kong AFP in English 1040 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, May 20 (AFP) — Army troops were on full alert Monday following the shakeup of the top ranks of the military carried out amid accusations of political interference ahead of general elections next month.

"Troops in all barracks have been put on alert," a military source told AFP.

He added: "Troops from some districts were preparing to move or were already moving towards Dhaka."

The source said a group of officers were trying to pacify troops divided over the move, although it was not clear just how split the military was over the decision to force two senior officers to retire and post out four others without specific assignments.

Officials could not be reached for comment.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and caretaker government chief Muhammad Habibur Rahman held crisis talks, but details were not immediately available.

Bangladesh: Biswas Retires 4 Officers; Opposition Criticizes Move

BK2005035996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0339 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, May 20 (AFP) — Four senior Bangladeshi army officers, including the defence intelligence chief, have been removed from their posts a day after two others were forced to retire, defence sources said Monday.

The sources said the four were "attached" — or posted out without specific assignments — on the orders of Army Chief Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim.

The officers are Major General Abdul Matin, Director General Defence Forces Intelligence, Major General Sabed Ali Bhuiyan, who served as principal staff officer to Former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and was continuing in the post, as well as a brigadier and a colonel.

Defence ministry spokesman could not be reached immediately for comment, but the sources said the development has caused "concern" in the barracks.

Major General G.H.Morshed Khan, general officer commanding Bogra area, northern Bangladesh, and Brigadier Miran Hamidur Rahman, Deputy Director of the para-military Bangladesh Rifles, were "forced" to retire on Saturday by President Abdur Rahman Biswas allegedly without assigning any reason.

"The army chief met the president and the two officers also appealed Sunday to the president to reconsider his order, but he (Biswas) has refused," one reliable source said.

The Bhorer Kagoj daily said no reasons were given and no investigation had preceded the action. The order came directly from the defence ministry, headed by Biswas, without consultation with the army headquarters.

There has been widespread criticism by politicians — and privately by some defence personnel — of President Biswas, a member of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), in charge of the defence ministry during the term of the caretaker government of Muhammad Habibur Rahman.

It was not immediately clear why the two officers, veterans of Bangladesh's 1971 independence war against Pakistan, were retired at such short notice.

Meanwhile, the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina Wajed reacted sharply to the retirements, warning the move might demoralise the armed forces.

In a statement issued late Sunday, she accused Biswas of "behaving like a BNP president and of serving the interest of BNP."

Bangladesh: Awami League, BNP Threaten To Boycott Elections

BK1805161796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has said that the illegal arms, which have not yet been recovered, may pose a threat to the lives of voters during the next parliamentary elections. Talking to reporters at Jessore Airport today, Sheikh Hasina reiterated that her party will boycott the elections if all illegal arms are not recovered before the elections.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1220 GMT on 18 May in a similar report adds: "The leaders of Bangladesh's two main parties both threatened to boycott elections next month, with one demanding all illegal weapons be rounded up and the other accusing the caretaker government of not being neutral.

["Former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia Saturday told reporters that 'the caretaker government is continuing to harass my party workers and if such actions continue we will have to think whether to participate or not in the polls,' on June 12.

["He (Chief Advisor Mohammad Habibur Rahman) is not neutral and not working neutrally,' she said, accusing state-run television and radio of being biased. She made the comments while announcing the election manifesto of her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), adding the fact she was announcing it did not 'confirm we will participate in the elections.' Earlier Zia's arch-rival Sheikh Hasina Wajed of the Awami League also threatened to boycott the polls saying Friday 'we will be compelled to boycott the elections if all illegal arms are not recovered before the polls.' She also demanded the cancellation of weapons licences which she alleged were issued by Zia's government to her BNP supporters. Such a move would ensure her party's participation in the forthcoming elections and a peaceful and secure election, Wajed said in her first major boycott threat since Rahman's caretaker administration took over from Zia's government on March 30 to oversee elections.

["There was no immediate comment from Rahman's office on the threats and allegations, although it has launched a drive to seize illegal weapons."]

Bangladesh: Awami League Releases Election Manifesto

BK1705040196 Dhaka THE MORNING SUN in English 11 May 96 p 3

[Report by BSS]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bangladesh Awami League [AL], if voted to power, will establish rule of law and ensure accountability and transparency of the administration in the greater interest of the nation, reports BSS.

"AL is determined to restore peace and stability in the country along with ensuring development, human rights and rule of law," AL President Sheikh Hasina said while releasing her party's manifesto to the local and foreign newsmen at the party central office in Dhaka on Friday [10 May].

Besides a large number of workers, party central leaders including, Abdus Samad Azad, Sayeda Zohra Tajuddin, Abdul Mannan, Abdul Momen, Abdur Razzak, Tofael Ahmed, S.A.M.S. Kibriya, Gaziul Huq, Prof Abu Sayeed and Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder were present on the occasion.

Sheikh Hasina said, if the respectability [as published] of running the country was reposed on AL during the June 12 elections, her party would adopt the state policies on the basis of national consensus.

Speaking on transparency and accountability, she said the administration would be made free from party influence and corruption.

"Necessary laws will be enacted for ascertaining appointment and service conditions of the employees of the Republic under constitutional provisions to build up an efficient and disciplined administrative system in the country," she said.

The AL chief said that measures would be taken to help the officials and employees of the Republic lead a respectable life and a wage commission would be formed to attain it.

Referring to the function of the Jatiya Sangsad [parliament], she said it would be the core centre of policy-making and law-making. "In the development efforts, national consensus will be given top priority and people's participation will be ensured," she added.

Sheikh Hasina while speaking about the country's defence system said necessary steps would be undertaken to raise the standard of efficiency and training of the defence forces whom she termed as the eternal vanguard for safeguarding the independence and sovereignty of the beloved motherland.

"Army, Navy, Airforce and Bangladesh Rifles will be made well- equipped befitting to the time to help them carry out their respective responsibilities," she said adding: "National Defence College will be set up aiming at strengthening the national security and coordination between military and civil officials."

She also said that the laws framed during the colonial rule would be changed to ensure professional development and job security of the officials and the soldiers.

Turning to the country's foreign policy, the Awami League chief said her party would administer foreign affairs in the light of "friendship to all, malice to none," the policy enunciated by "Father of the Nation" Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She said the main objective of the foreign policy would be to protect country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and also to accelerate economic development.

She said efforts will be made so that Bangladesh could play its active role in the United Nations and its other agencies. "Our party will also maintain meaningful and cordial relations with the Non-Aligned Movement, Commonwealth, OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] and the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation]," she added.

Besides, Sheikh Hasina said, Awami League will take effective steps for strengthening the regional cooperation efforts through maintaining good and cordial relations with neighbouring countries.

"AL will extend its full cooperation and support to the SAARC and take active part in its approaches for consolidating the regional cooperation," she said.

In her election manifesto, Sheikh Hasina reiterated that the Bangladesh-India friendship treaty would not be renewed on the expiry of its tenure.

She said this treaty was of a special importance in 1972 for maintaining security and upholding independence and sovereignty of the new-born Bangladesh.

"There is no need for renewal of this treaty in view of the changed world situation as well as establishment of regional cooperation within the SAARC framework," she added.

In this connection, Sheikh Hasina said that there had been confusing and misleading propaganda based on falsehood and distorting interpretation about this treaty.

She said no government during the last 20 years had uttered a single word to annul this treaty nor had they criticised it but described it as "friendship treaty" inside parliament repeatedly.

After the fall of BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] from power, Sheikh Hasina said, it has resorted to provocative mischievous propaganda against this treaty only to confuse the nation.

Referring to the achievement of independence under the leadership of AL, she said the dynamism and farsightedness of Bangabandhu had materialised the dream of the people of this country and subsequently helped the withdrawal of Indian troops from this soil within 90 days of the surrender of the Pakistani occupation force.

"Bangladesh AL, as the torch-bearer of Bangali [Bengali] nationalism and spirit and ideals of the liberation war, will protect the country's independence and sovereignty by shedding its last drop of blood," she asserted.

Referring to the Ganges water, the AL chief said the BNP government had utterly failed to secure the just demand of the Ganges water as per the international laws.

She said Bangabandhu through mutual understanding with India had secured 44,000 cusecs of Ganges water for Bangladesh while [former president] Ziaur Rahman achieved only 33,000 cusecs and General Ershad fetched further low at 25,000 cusecs.

In view of BNP's total failure in resolving the Farakka [barrage] issue and also due to the non-existence of any agreement on sharing of Ganges water, Sheikh Hasina said the whole northern Bangladesh was now being forced into gradual desertification.

"The agriculture and the overall economy are now facing disaster due to that failure," she said and expressed her determination that Bangladesh AL would realise the just share of the Ganges water through a bilateral agreement with India for reaching a lasting solution to the issue.

She also said that steps would be taken on priority basis to ensure the just share of the waters of other international rivers.

On law and order situation, the AL chief said all-out measures would be undertaken to free the country of all illegal arms and restore order at all levels as desired by the nation for long.

She said all social evil forces including extortionists, killers, dacoits [bandits], hijackers, rapists, women oppressors and other disturbing elements would be dealt with an iron hand.

"We want to ensure full security to the life of all citizen by establishing a terrorism-free society," she said adding that due importance would be laid on modernisation and development of the police force to attain this objective.

She also said that the legitimate demands of the police, ansars [auxiliary force] and VDPs [Village Defense Parties] would be given due consideration while the fire service would be given more attention for its development.

Speaking on the corruption, the AL chief said all-out measures would be taken to translate into reality the dream of the people to have a society free of this vice.

"Those who have looted the national resources, built their fortunes illegally and abused state powers would be subjected to legal actions after proper investigation as per the law of the land," she said.

On independence of judiciary, Sheikh Hasina said that judiciary would be separated from the executive as per the basic principles of the Constitution ensuring its independence to establish rule of law in society.

Speaking about the mass media, she said AL believed in free flow of information and full freedom of the press. "Radio, Television and national news agency will be given the status of full autonomous bodies with a view to freeing them from party influence," she said adding, "the state-owned newspapers will be transferred to private ownership."

According to the AL manifesto, the BNP government during the last five years had pushed the country's agriculture to total destruction. The farmers had to give up their lives during the BNP rule only for raising their demand for fertiliser on fair prices, she said adding, country's dependence on imported food had also increased during that period.

Sheikh Hasina said her party would bring an end to such condition through extending full cooperation towards the farmers by providing fertiliser, seeds, insecticides, agro-inputs and irrigation facilities on fair prices.

"If necessary, adequate subsidy will be provided in these sectors side by side providing agriculture loans on easy terms to the farmers," she said adding that all-out steps including introduction of modern farming system would be taken to attain food autarky and increase production of cash crops in the country.

The AL chief also assured of introducing realistic policies for a stable market and profitability of agriculture products in the greater interest of farmers.

The aims and objectives of the party manifesto also include distribution of khas [government-vested] land among the landless farmers, effective measures for modernisation of poultry rearing, pisciculture and livestock farming.

Besides, land reform and land management would be made modern and time befitting while steps would be taken to protect the environment through increased afforestation and tree plantation, the manifesto said.

The manifesto spoke of AL's basic objectives to expand indigenous industries, creation of job opportunities and increasing production and exports. The party will give due priority to ready made garments, jute and jute goods, tea, tobacco, hides and skins and other export oriented industries side by side expanding agro-based medium and small industries and cottage industries.

Besides, distribution of yarn on fair price among the weavers, exemption of handloom loans and marketing of products of the handlooms are other measures of AL to modernise handloom sector, the manifesto said.

It said realistic measures would be taken to improve the lot of the independent professionals including ironsmith [blacksmith], potters and fishermen.

AL, the manifesto said, would provide all incentives in the light of the open market economy for expansion of private sector industries through individual entrepreneurship.

Other measures include simplification of laws and procedures on investment and industrialisation, creation of opportunities for setting up industries at district and thana [police station] levels, creation of jobs through expanding small and medium industries and turning public sector enterprises into profitable ones through radical changes in the management system.

Proper steps would a]so be taken to maintain balance of trade through narrowing the gap between export and import side by side introducing free trade policy.

Sheikh Hasina said the reform process in the country's economy would be sped up and assured that no private sector enterprise would be nationalised.

"One of the main policies of AL is to ensure rational wage for the labourers," the manifesto said adding that the party would adopt realistic policies to evaluate the contribution of those who were playing key role in the economic field.

Besides it said, AL would frame an effective labour policy under tripartite understanding with a view to establishing a good employee-employer relations.

The manifesto said AL would resolve all disputes existing in the industrial sector through joint discussion in light of the international labour convention. The party would also ensure the benefit of productivity for the workers.

Various welfare programmes will also be undertaken to provide facilities like education, health, shelter and recreation to the labourers in consistence with the existing labour as well as financial capacities of respective industries.

"Effective measures will be taken to stop child labour," the manifesto said adding that special schemes would be taken to protect the rights and privileges of children under the United Nations declaration.

Bangladesh: Foreign Exchange Reserves Fall to $2 Billion

BK1705115696 Dhaka THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS in English 15 May 96 pp 1, 8

[Express report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserve fell further to 2.098 billion U.S. dollars on May 12 from 3.07 billion at the end of last fiscal year, a Bangladesh Bank (BB) statement said Tuesday. The forex reserve was at its peak at 3.4 billion dollars in April 1995. The import of huge amount of food- grain due to shortfall caused by prolonged drought, excess rainfalls and floods, rise in imports of other goods due to increased economic activity at the beginning of the current fiscal and decline in remittances due to political unrest attributed to the fall in forex reserve.

However, the BB expected that the reserve would come to a comfortable level at the end of the current fiscal as both the remittances and exports had started rising. The amount of remittances was 122.8 million dollars in April this year and such trend would continue until the end of the current fiscal, it said. The matters were disclosed at a meeting on finance, credit and banking issues held at the Board Room of the central bank with Planning and Finance Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud in chair. Central Bank Governor Khorshed Alam and Banking Division Secretary of the Finance Ministry A.T.M. Shamsul Huda were also present at the meeting. Disbursement of credit during first nine months of the current fiscal year rose to Tk [taka] 410.46 billion marking a rise of 25.63 percent over that in the same period last fiscal, the statement said. The amount is also 13.75 percent higher than that disbursed during the entire 1994-95 fiscal year, the statement added. The government borrowing during the nine month period rose by Tk 3.84 billion compared with that of the same period of last fiscal, it said, adding that the borrowing by public sector enterprises increased by Tk 207 million during the period.

The meeting revealed that money circulation at the end of March this year rose to Tk 435.35 billion registering a rise of 7.33 percent over that of March 31 last year. It was also 3.13 percent higher than the figure on June 30, 1995.

The BB statement said that the money circulation had not increased to that extent despite rise in the amount of loan disbursement due to a remarkable decline in the foreign exchange reserve.

It said that the pressure found on price escalation at the beginning of the current fiscal was eased to a great extent due to the low growth in money circulation.

According to the latest estimates, the rate of price escalation at the end of this February stood at 5.2 percent and it was expected to remain confined within 5.5 percent at the end of current fiscal year.

The BB statement said that the liquidity level of the scheduled banks worsened recently due to the need for settling huge amount in import bills, besides some of the banks' inability to efficiently manage their assets and liabilities.

The situation improved after the central bank had financed some of the banks through its discount window, it said.

The deterioration in liquidity level of the banks pushed the call money rate up to as high as 28 percent in April. The rate is now ranging between 6 and 9.5 percent.

India

India: Prime Minister's Address to Nation

BK1905154796 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in Hindi 1430 GMT 19 May 96

[Address to the nation by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee; place and date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sisters and brothers: I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to address the nation as prime minister. The president invited me to form the government because the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] and its allies won the largest number of seats. The president's decision is entirely in tune with established democratic norms. In fact, it strengthens them. As a mark of respect for the will of the people, I have accepted this responsibility with all humility. I am deeply dismayed — and I am sure most of you share this sentiment — that this decision has been unfairly criticized by some groups. Those who underwent many splits, came together and formed conflicting combinations, and still failed to win more seats than the BJP are now prepared to join hands without any hesitation — even with those they opposed in the polls — with great vigor. This can only be called unprincipled politics motivated by the sole aim of coming to power. During the last week, we have not heard them say one word about what they would do for you or the country. They seem to have a single-point agenda — stop the BJP at any cost. To achieve this, a determined campaign has been launched to paint us in a bad light. This has only one purpose — to defeat the mandate given by the people. I am confident that those who truly believe in democracy will reconsider the whole situation.

Instead of entering into a debate on communalism or the true meaning of secularism, a futile effort is being made to obscure issues; to avoid an honest and meaningful debate. India is an ancient civilization. It has always had different sects and religious practices. We do not limit ourselves to one God, one prophet, or a single book. We are a multireligious country and we believe in the equality of all religious faiths. It is because of this that we have never had any struggle over the correct path to achieving a realization of God. Equal respect for all faiths is part of our civilizational consciousness. Secularism is thus integrated into our lives. India never was and never will be a theocratic state.

My government is committed to creating an environment of social harmony and peace. What happened at Ayodhya on 6 December 1992 was not the result of any preplanned conspiracy. If problems related to religion are not resolved over a long period of time, the result is what happened at Ayodhya. Civilized societies have two methods of solving disputes like Ayodhya — through discussion and dialogue or through legislation. In the case of Ayodhya, neither of these two approaches was pursued seriously. The dispute was in the courts for decades and remains there.

It is hardly necessary to recall that immediately after the advent of Islam in West Asia, the first mosque was built by an Arab trader in the Indian state of Kerala, then ruled by a Hindu king. In a like manner, soon after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ the first church was established in India. These manifestations of different faiths are living symbols of our secular traditions. We will maintain these traditions.

Eleven successive general elections and scores of state assembly elections have clearly demonstrated that we are a mature democracy and an enlightened nation. It is necessary for us not to allow irrelevant issues to cloud our national vision and shroud the real issues. The electorate faced the questions of development, elimination of corruption, and transparency and accountability in all spheres of government. These remain entirely relevant today. In short, India needs good governance.

The primary issue before us is uplifting the poor. Despite possessing adequate natural resources, the majority of our countrymen remain poor. They are deprived of opportunity and all avenues for growth. I know their conditions. I have lived it and that is why I know their pain. Immediately after the 1996-97 budget, my government is committed to announcing and implementing a revolutionary 10-year plan focussed on providing nutrition for the children of the poor, their health care, and facilities for education so they are brought up to the same level as other children. We will mobilize adequate resources for this in the very first year. Along with the rationalization and simplification of the tax structure and the revenue regime, we will take steps to ensure strict compliance. My government will ensure that funds allocated for uplifting the poor actually reach them so that we are able to achieve our goal of social and economic equality within the next decade.

You are aware, of course, that there are certain prerequisites for achieving such ambitious plans. These are political will, honest administration, and determination to spend money for the purposes for which it is allocated.

As a first concrete step toward bringing about honesty in the administration from top to bottom, my government will make public the income and assets of all members of my cabinet within 30 days from today. We will not hesitate to take the sternest measures to see that corruption is eradicated from public life so that there is no misuse of funds allocated for development schemes and that they are utilized with care and diligence.

Creation of productive and sustainable employment, especially in rural areas, is the most important facet of poverty eradication. My government pledges to allocate 60 percent of planned funds for agricultural and rural development. Toward that end, we will soon begin the process of identifying 50 million of the poorest families for immediate relief. In addition, we will protect the needy sections of society, especially in tribal areas, by better targeting the public distribution system and ensuring price stability. My government will give primacy to enacting legislation in cooperation with other political parties to secure 33 percent reservation for women in state assemblies and the Lok Sabha.

My government will not misuse Article 356 of the Indian Constitution to achieve political ends. Immediate steps will be taken to restore the balance of resources in favor of the states. Steps will also be taken very speedily to convene and activate an interstate council to settle interstate and center-state disputes. My government will very quickly assess deficiencies in the physical infrastructure, especially those that are hampering the growth of the economy and our exports. Toward this end, we will form a powerful committee of economic ministers under the chairmanship of the prime minister to implement several stalled projects in a time- bound manner. All such projects will be cleared speedily for implementation.

The new government is committed to the quick enactment of comprehensive electoral reforms, keeping in mind the Goswami Committee report as well as the recent judgment of the Supreme Court.

My government will actively pursue a foreign policy based on peace, equality, and cooperation. Our immediate goal is to improve our relations with all our neighbors, including Pakistan.

My government will not slacken the efforts to establish peace in Jammu and Kashmir. The elections in the state will be conducted as per the announced program. The sovereignty and integrity of the state will be protected at all costs.

I salute the dedication, sense of duty, and valor of the soldiers and officers of our armed forces. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and scientific community — all of whom contribute to national construction — are the true sentinels of India. I am committed to upholding their honor, dignity, and welfare.

My government will very quickly introduce administrative reforms to simplify procedures so that in those departments that interact frequently with the public, there will be no scope for arbitrariness or delay. We have already begun identifying 15 areas where simplification of rules and regulations will deliver justice and prompt response to the common people. Directions will be issued to the civil service all along its chain of command to handle within 15 days all matters related to the day-to-day problems of the people. The power to say no to simple routine requirements of life will be reduced drastically. Scope for arbitrary conditionality will be minimized.

Many of the new things I have said tonight may not carry weight because previous governments have had a dismal record in this regard. Some may even appear to be dreams in light of the past record of unkept promises. Despite this, I pledge that we will carry out the assurances that we give today. I want to realize all these dreams for you. If we do not dream, how will dreams come true?

In one of my poems I prayed: Oh God, do not lift me to such heights that I cannot embrace strangers; do not ever give me that curtness. My prayer is now a commitment. I conclude by leaving this pledge and this dream with you.

Hail India!

India: PM Comments on Kashmir Elections, Assam

BK1905163296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The prime minister says his government is committed to creating an environment of social harmony and peace. In his address to the nation a short while ago, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee reiterated that India will never be a theocratic state. [passage omitted]

Earlier, speaking at a rally in Delhi, the prime minister said that the government is committed to holding free and fair polls in Jammu and Kashmir peacefully. Mr. Vajpayee said any obstacle will be removed at all costs. The rally was organized to felicitate him on becoming the country's prime minister. He expressed concern at the deteriorating law and order situation in Assam and said that the government will not allow the situation to deteriorate further. Stressing that the mandate is in favor of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], Mr. Vajpayee claimed that the BJP only can give a stable government at the center. He said his party which sat in the opposition for over the last 40 years to serve the people cannot shun away the responsibility of taking the governance according to the people's mandate. Mr. Vajpayee alleged that those parties which contested separately and even against each other now want to capture power at any cost.

The BJP president, Mr. L.K. Advani, said that his party wants to promote nationalism in the country.

India: Prime Minister Proposes Speaker, Discusses Priorities

BK1805155296 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister says his government will not indulge in any unfair means or horse trading to prove its majority in the Lok Sabha. In an interview to be telecast tomorrow by a private TV network, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee said things are moving within all political parties and people are changing their minds frequently. He said in such a situation, he does not think that any party has taken a final decision.

On the issue of election of a new speaker of the Lok Sabha, the prime minister said he has requested the Congress president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, to give his consent to the name of Mr. Shivraj Patil [Congress leader and speaker in last Lok Sabha].

Mr. Vajpayee said his government's first priorities are to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir and check the deteriorating law and order situation in Assam.

Mr. Vajpayee said there will be no change in the foreign policy of the country. The prime minister charged Pakistan of trying hard to prevent elections in Kashmir and said no pressure from Islamabad would stop the election process. He said abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which grants special status to Jammu and Kashmir, is not a priority now.

On the economic front, Mr. Vajpayee said no project of any multinational company and no foreign investment proposal approved by the previous government would be reviewed. He said his government is against the quota permit system.

India: Congress Official Rejects BJP's Proposed Speaker

BK2005092196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress Parliamentary Board secretary, Mr. V. Narayanswami, has said that his party will not accept the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]-sponsored candidate for the post of the Lok Sabha speaker. Talking to newsmen in Pondicherry today, he said that the Congress, the National Front, and the left parties will function unitedly and vote against the BJP government.

The two independent Lok Sabha members from Arunachal Pradesh have said that they are yet to decide on joining any party or extending a support to any government. In a joint statement issued in Itanagar, Mr. Tomo Riba and Vangovo Rajkumar clarified that there has been misinterpretation in this regard in a report published in a section of the press.

A member of the National Executive of the Janata Dal and former minister of Orissa, Mr. H.C. Bakshipatra, has criticized the party's approach to seek Congress support at the national level to form a government. In a press release, he has said that the Janata Dal has received a mandate to sit in the opposition and the party should honor it.

India: CPI Leader Named Speaker Pro Tem of Lok Sabha

BK2005091496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The senior most member of the Lok Sabha and veteran CPI [Communist Party of India] leader Indrajit Gupta has been appointed pro tem speaker of the house. A notification issued by the president says Mr. Gupta will continue till a speaker of the house is elected.

The brief session of the 11th Lok Sabha begins on Wednesday [22 May].

India: BJP General Secretary Promises No 'Horse Trading'

BK1805130496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has made it clear that it will not indulge in horse trading or splitting any party to secure a vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha. Briefing newspersons in New Delhi today, the party general secretary, Mr. Venkaiya Naidu, said that the BJP expects that the members of the Third Front in their wisdom will come forward to support the BJP on their own at the time of the vote of confidence. He said that the recent statements of the NF-LF [National Front-Left Front] leaders show their panic reaction. He claimed that these parties and the Third Front cannot work together as there are serious ideological differences amongst them. Mr. Naidu described the alliance of the NF-LF with the Congress as unholy as the front leaders have fought against the Congress in the recent general elections.

India: Defense Minister Promises 'Major Policy Changes'

BK1805083496 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] government envisages some major changes in the defense sector. The defense minister, Mr Pramod Mahajan, in an exclusive interview to our correspondent Rudranath Sanyal, said that the changes are necessary to strengthen the armed forces:

[Begin recording] [Mahajan] Definitely there will be major policy changes and we will see that our country's borders are protected even better than earlier. Cannot attach any value tag to the integrity and the protection of the country; so whatever value you have to pay for it, you have to pay for it. We are a peace-loving country and we will be a peace-loving country. We do want very friendly relations with Pakistan. But at the same time, if there is ISI [Inter Service Intelligence] activities, insurgency, then definitely this country will have to tackle it with an iron hand. [end recording]

Earlier, talking to newsmen after assuming office, the defense minister said that there is a need to increase the defense budget. Mr. Mahajan said that major policy decisions will be taken only after the government secures the vote of confidence.

India: Assam Party Leader Reaffirms Support to Third Front

BK1705160896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The new Assam chief minister, Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, has categorically stated that his party, AGP [Asom Gana Parishad], will go with the Third Front when the vote of confidence is sought by BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] later this month. In a statement in New Delhi, Mr. Mahanta said there is no question of revising the AGP stand.

India: 'Senior Officials' Dispatched To Review Assam Situation

BK1905131496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union home minister, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, has said that two senior officials from Defense and Home Ministries are being sent to violence-hit areas of Assam to review the situation. Addressing a press conference in Allahabad today, he said that the government will firmly curb communal forces and provide full protection to minorities, women, and weaker sections of the society.

As reported, the state government has set up a commission of inquiry to probe violence in Kokrajhar District. The chief minister, Mr. P.K. Mohanta, has appealed to the people to maintain peace and amity. He said all possible efforts are being made to bring back normalcy. Mr. Mohanta said that the situation is now under control and initiatives have already been taken for holding talks with insurgent groups. The Army is continuing its flag march in the affected areas. An all-party delegation from the state is also visiting riot-hit areas.

India: Political Parties Discuss Assam Unrest; Arson Reported

BK1805115996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Assam, the all-party meeting held in Guwahati this morning has urged the state government to take stern action to contain violence and to maintain law and order in Kokrajhar District and other areas. The meeting, convened by the chief minister, Mr. Prafullo Kumar Mohanta, also decided to send an all-party delegation immediately to visit the strife-torn areas.

The meeting was attended, among others, by the leaders of the AGP [Asom Gana Parishad], the Indian National Congress, CPI [Communist Party of India], CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist], Autonomous State Demand Committee, the United People's Party of Assam, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], and the Janata Dal.

Meanwhile, the situation in the violence-hit Gossaigaon area is stated to be tense. There have been reports of arson in a few places. The Army staged a flag march in several places and a large number of paramilitary forces have been deployed in the affected areas. Reports say that two villages, Karigaon and Kalabuchi, was set on fire this morning. The indefinite curfew in the Gossaigaon and the Kochugaon area imposed on Thursday [16 May] evening continues. About 10 columns of the Army have been deployed in the area and in and around Kokrajhar. More than 45,000 people have taken shelter in relief camps in Gossaigaon. The authorities have initiated necessary relief measures for those staying in the camps.

India: Vajpayee Warns Pakistan Against Meddling in Kashmir Polls

BK2005041996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The prime minister has warned Pakistan against meddling with the election process in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a rally organized in the capital yesterday to felicitate him on becoming the prime minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee said his government will not compromise with terrorists and subversive forces at any cost. He said divisive forces should know that there is a government at the center now which will not tolerate them. Mr. Vajpayee reiterated the commitment of his government to hold free and fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir as scheduled.

He expressed concern at the worsening law and order situation in Assam and said the government will not allow the situation to deteriorate further. Stressing that the people's mandate is in favor of his party, Mr. Vajpayee said the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] alone can give a stable government at the center. [passage omitted]

India: Arrangements 'Complete' for Kashmir Elections

BK1905094196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Kashmir Valley, all arrangements are complete to hold free and fair elections for the two Lok Sabha seats at Anantnag and Baramula on Thursday [23 May]. Polling material has been dispatched to the far-flung border areas and training of the election staff has been completed. The state's additional chief secretary, home, Mr. S.S. Billoria, said in Srinagar today that elaborate security arrangements have been made and nobody will be allowed to disrupt the election process in the valley.

Meanwhile, electioneering has picked up momentum as only two days are left for campaigning to end. The candidates are using all possible means to attract the voters. The main attractions are the rallies where local folk dances are performed and the voters are cautioned about the evil designs of militants.

Polling for the two parliamentary constituencies in Srinagar and Udhampur will be held on the 30th of this month. Counting in all the six constituencies in the state will be taken up on 1 June. The chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, briefed the prime minister today on the arrangements.

India: Pakistani 'Mercenary' Killed by Security Forces Identified

BK1805112896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Kashmir Valley, the commander in chief of Lashkar-e-Toaiba [contingent of students] — a Pakistani national, Abu Abdul Rahman, alias Shahed — was among the eight foreign mercenaries killed in an encounter with security forces at (Aizot), District Badgam yesterday. He was the most wanted foreign mercenary responsible for killing a number of civilians. This group was specially deputed by Pakistan to create large-scale disturbances during the election period in Jammu and Kashmir.

India: 8 'Mercenaries' Among 21 Militants Killed in Kashmir

BK1705161296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, 21 militants, including eight foreign mercenaries, were killed during search operations by the security forces since last evening. The mercenaries, most of them Pakistanis, were killed in an encounter with the Army at Zabu Kariar in Barewa area of Badgom District. A huge quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered from the encounter site. Twelve infiltrators were killed when they tried to cross over to the Indian side in Ramgarh sector of Jammu and Kupwara in Kashmir. One Pakistani-trained militant of a banned militant outfit surrendered before the security forces at Kupwara along with some arms and ammunition. The official spokesman told AIR Jammu correspondent that the apparent aim of Pakistan in sending the intruders at this time is to cause disturbances during the coming elections. Two CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] jawans [soldiers] were killed when militants fired a rocket at a camp in Doda town.

Iran

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Denies Tehran Interfering in Bahrain

LD1805174796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In his first round of talks with Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz Jasim al-Sa'dun, the speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, Majles Speaker ['Ali Akbar] Nateq-Nuri said that the two countries' long-standing ties and mutual interests demanded extensive and sincere relations, and he expressed gratitude for the positive stance adopted by Kuwait regarding the crimes committed by the Zionist regime in Lebanon and for its condemnation of the budget approved by the U.S. Congress against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Majles speaker described doing away with tension in the relations between the countries of the region and greater expansion of ties as the principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategy in the Middle East, adding: Today, the countries of the region must proceed in such a way as to reduce the presence of the United States in the region.

Referring to the situation in Bahrain, Nateq-Nuri said: I declare, as an official of the Islamic Republic of Iran, that we have not interfered so far in any way in the internal problems of Bahrain and we have no intention of interfering there.

The Majles speaker expressed the hope that the countries of the region could set aside ethnic and racial affiliations in order to strive for the rational resolution of regional problems.

The speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, for his part, referred to the Majles speaker's visit to Kuwait last year and said: Since then, all the problems between the two countries have been resolved, constant coordination is taking place between the two countries' parliamentary groups at inter-parliamentary conferences, and a Kuwaiti friendship group has also visited Iran. He added: This is an example of blossoming and heart-warming relations which can serve as a model for the other countries of the region.

Al-Sa'dun said that the only way of avoiding the presence of foreigners in the region was to promote a climate of trust and confidence between the countries of the region. He said: I recently met a delegation from the U.S. Congress in Kuwait and I said to them, when you approve a 20 million dollar budget against Iran, Iran, too, approves a budget to defend itself and that is Iran's right.

He concluded by hoping that, with the removal of the existing misunderstandings in the region, peace and security would return to the region.

Iran: Bahraini Unrest Described; Link With Iran Denied

NC1705143896 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 14 May 96 p 12

[Commentary by F. Asef: "The Weaknesses of the Shaykhs Ruling Over Bahrain"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Bahrain is a minuscule shaykhdom that is of immense importance from the strategic point of view especially for the security of the Persian Gulf and the littoral states in the region, including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It is also a suitable base for the boats and ships of the region's countries and was separated from Iran on the basis of a colonialist plan in 1975 and became independent.

In 1979, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which was based on a popular movement, shook the whole world. The West believed that in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, the revolutionaries would try to cross the red line as is done in capitalist countries (such as the 28 Mordad 1332 [year beginning 21 March 1953] coup d'etat in Iran, the Allende coup in Chile, the Bay of Pigs incident in Cuba) and by resorting to military force, they would stage more coups d'etat in the Persian Gulf countries! [repetitive passage omitted]

The Arab regimes attribute all internal revolutionary actions to the Islamic Republic of Iran for this reason. Bahraini newspapers, which reflect the government's views, announced that Iran is responsible for the unrest in the Bahraini shaykhdom. They never state, however, that the government's opponents, especially the Shiites, demand the reestablishment of the parliament, which was dissolved in 1975, and the release of political prisoners, who number about 2000 according to their lawyers.

They never announce that in order to suppress the popular movement they have sought the assistance of British and American advisers and that Saudi dollars are being used to strengthen their security system. They will never say that the Bahraini regime does not trust its own local police and that they use foreign troops to protect their area.

The people of the shaykhdom do not know why their rulers are collaborating with Saudi Arabia against Qatar. Not only are these rulers unable to display any reaction against the presence of the foreign forces in their region, they are also incapable of condemning the Zionist regime's military operations in southern Lebanon and the massacre in Qana.

According to reports, the level of violation of human rights and freedoms is so excessive that the security forces do not permit the families of those killed in clashes to hold memorial services or interment ceremonies. The reports state that the situation in Bahrain is expected to deteriorate further in the coming weeks and months and more extensive clashes will be seen.

In such circumstances, the Bahraini regime would be well-advised to implement radical reforms in the country instead of attributing internal unrest to foreign countries.

Iran: Official Denies Giving Military Aid to Lebanon's Hizballah

NC1705192096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mohamad Kazem Khonsari, assistant director of the Middle East and North Africa Department of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, today denied U.S. and Israeli allegations. He said: What we are giving to Lebanon's Hizballah is moral and political support only.

In an interview published by AL-NAHAR today, Khonsari added: We are not giving military or material support to Hizballah because the latter does not need such support in light of the popular backing it is enjoys in Lebanon.

Iran: Tehran—Cease-Fire Violations Make Peace More 'Remote'

NC2005064996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 20 May 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday's shelling of two villages in south Lebanon and an attack on Lebanese fishermen by the Zionist regime again prove that the Zionists are not faithful to their commitments and that their aggressive and hegemonistic attitude emerges at the slightest excuse, namely domestic rivalry.

The Zionist regime's raid on defenseless Lebanese civilians violates the recent cease-fire established following 16 days of raids on Lebanon. Based on the cease-fire agreement, which is being monitored by a committee involving Syria, America, and France, the conflicting sides must refrain from attacks on civilians on both sides of the Lebanese and occupied Palestine border. But, as expected and as proven by experience, the Tel Aviv regime cannot be trusted. The signatures of the Zionist regime's heads on pacts lack any value, since the Zionist leaders regard all their commitments from the perspective of their own interests. They easily ignore these commitments, especially since they enjoy America's unstinting support and—encouraged by American influence in the Security Council—they have no worries about how international society will react.

In the Zionist army's recent aggression against Lebanon on land, air, and sea, Tel Aviv said the firing of Katyusha missiles at northern occupied Palestine by combatants of the Lebanese Islamic Resistance prompted its operations. But Western sources said it was the Zionists who planted a bomb in a village in southern Lebanon and killed two civilians, thus violating the 1372 [1993] pact, and that Lebanese Hizballah raids on northern Israel were a reaction to the terrorist act by Zionist mercenaries.

Recently, Britain's THE OBSERVER reported that the Tel Aviv regime had formed special squads assigned to assassinate Lebanon's Islamic Resistance leaders. These terrorist squads assassinated several Lebanese Hizballah combatants and leaders of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad of Palestine, most notably Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi. Apparently the Zionists now intend to expand their terrorist acts in the occupied territories in Lebanon and Palestine.

Observers believe that repeated violations of the cease-fire agreements by the Zionist regime make peace and tranquility in the Middle East a more remote prospect each day.

Iran: Commentary on Israel's Latest 'Propaganda Wave'

LD1705152496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 17 May 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the propaganda wave of the Zionist regime against Iran, its informers have alleged that a man under the name of Mohammad Hoseyn Meqdad, who had entered the occupied lands with a forged passport via a Swiss plane and was injured amid making explosives, took orders from Iran's Embassy in Beirut to practice his suicidal activities. Iran has been accused to take part in the terrorist activities by the Zionist regime in the past few months. According to political experts, the main motivation of the Zionist regime for making such accusations can be covered via two aspects. First Shim'on Peres, the prime minister of the Zionist regime, tries to attract more votes compared to his rivals by drawing the issue of Iran's threat to the usurper Zionist regime in the coming elections.

Meanwhile, from the foreign policy aspect, it is trying a scenario for the Arabic countries, reiterating Iran's threat to them and therefore encouraging the regional countries to have closer ties with the Zionist regime.

The issue of the arrest of Mohammad Hoseyn Meqdad, drawing of the explosive scenario, and relating him to Iran's Embassy in Beirut were all to achieve these goals of the Zionist regime. The Zionist regime has always been forced to spread rumors in its confrontation with Iran. Therefore, no-one would be persuaded by the pseudo- claims of the Zionists anymore.

The Zionist prime minister, Shim'on Peres, and his allies should think of other ways to attract the votes in the coming elections. Reacting to the recent allegations of Shim'on Peres, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mahmud Mohammadi, in an interview with the Qatari newspaper (?AL-SHARQ), said that the only crime of Iran is its opposition to the expansionist policies of the Zionist regime which after the start of the negotiations in 1991 has been under the cover of the peace process.

It is clear to everyone that the peace process is an initiative for the implementation of the clear expansionist policies of the Zionist regime to extend its territory from the Nile to the Euphrates. However, this time its policy is more complex and has more dimensions. The economic aspect of the Zionist tyranny has priority to the other aspects.

Iran: Commentary Views CIA Objectives in North Africa, Red Sea

LD1905152796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 19 May 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] As you have heard in the news bulletins, some regional publications have reported secret visits by the head of the U.S. espionage organization, CIA, to several African countries. According to these reports, John Deutch, in his visit to Ethiopia, met certain Sudanese rebel leaders and expressed the hope that the UN diplomatic sanctions against Khartoum will result in undermining the Sudanese Government and army and will strengthen the position of the rebels. The sanctions, imposed last week, as a result of America exercising its influence on the Security Council, are the result of accusations by Egypt, Ethiopia, and America against the Sudanese Government concerning its giving asylum to three Egyptians suspected of being involved in the assassination attempt against Husni Mubarak. Sudan has rejected the allegation and Egypt and Ethiopia have failed so far to put forward any documented evidence in this regard. However, because the American government pursued the matter and exerted pressure, the Security Council, after issuing a two-month deadline, imposed diplomatic sanctions against Khartoum.

Experts believe this American move — which in all probability was designed by the U.S. espionage organization, the CIA — to be another step towards toppling the Islamic Sudanese Government or forcing Khartoum to submit to America and abandon its stances.

Earlier, there were reports concerning direct military aid and political and financial support given by the U.S. espionage organizations and the Zionist regime to the rebels fighting against the Sudanese Government. Washington's support for the rebels stationed in the Sudan's neighbors, including Eritrea, Kenya, and Uganda, and its provoking of the Egyptian Government against Khartoum can be considered links in the chain of the U.S. containment [darbargiri] policy for Sudan aimed at making that country's long borders insecure and involving Khartoum in several fronts at once.

Besides the Sudanese issue, it is said that another objective of the CIA head's tour of North Africa was to pave the way to delineate a security framework for the Red Sea without Arab participation. Most experts evaluate the Zionist regime's increasing influence in Eritrea and its ramifications, including the occupation of Yemeni islands by Eritrea, within that same framework.

Iran: Paper Announces Demonstration in Tehran 25 May

LD1705215796

[FBIS Summary] Tehran KEYHAN in Persian on 13 May carries on page 1 an advertisement entitled: "Demonstration in Defense of the Values of the Islamic Revolution from 1700 to 1900."

The advertisement says that a demonstration entitled defense of the values of the Islamic revolution will take place on Saturday 25 May from 1230 to 1430 GMT in Tehran. The demonstrators will mark the end of a week devoted to the notion of promoting virtue and prohibiting vice. This is associated with the fight against Western cultural onslaught.

The advertisement is signed by "The public relations department of the headquarters for the revival of promoting virtue, and prohibiting vice.'

Iran: Basijis To Help Promote Virtue, Prohibit Vice

LD1805112196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Week for Promoting Virtue and Prohibiting Vice is to begin tomorrow and some 230,000 Basij volunteers are to participate in the promotion of this divine duty. The commander of the Seyyed ol-Shohada Basij Headquarters announced the news today in an interview with correspondents, and added that popular forces will be stationed in tents pitched across the city, and if needed will promote virtue and prohibit vice.

Referring to the fact that the week is intended to revive divine duties and guard the values of the Islamic revolution, he announced that on the last day of the week, on 25 May, Tehran's God-seeking people will gather under the banner of the Great March for the Defense of the Values of the Islamic Revolution.

The Week for Promoting Virtue and Prohibiting Vice will begin on the first day of the lunar month of Moharram [19 May] and will be held across the country for a week.

Iran: Khamene'i on Islamicization of Universities, Basijis

LD1805205496 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Eminence Ayatollah ['Ali] Khamene'i today received the minister and officials of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education as well as the heads of higher educational and research centers.

In the course of important remarks, he said that the possession of knowledge, faith, and capability by the officials in charge of the country's higher educational establishments was a fulfillment of God's decree. He emphasized that the administrators of the country's educational establishments had the important responsibility and great historic duty of using these resources for the growth and sophistication of the nation and the country. [passage omitted]

The eminent leader referred to the substantial growth in universities since the victory of the Islamic revolution, saying: I obtain information from various sources about what is going on in academic and educational centers and I am also well acquainted with the nature of universities. On the basis of this, I believe, with all my being, that in Islamic Iran, the universities have undergone a lot of change for academic reasons and because of religious enlightenment and the depth of religious belief. Yet, at the same time, our universities have not yet become Islamic.

The eminent leader pointed to the emphasis placed repeatedly on the reform of universities and added: It is now time to take action, wisely and tactfully. If you do not do this, the nation will fall behind by several years and will be harmed, thus depriving you of the honor of having achieved this.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said that the Islamization of universities is a delicate, exact, and academic task. He said: The correct thing to do is to preserve the academic nature of the university while moving towards its Islamization. You should know that if you perform this task correctly, others will imitate you and humanity will benefit from it.

The eminent leader of the Islamic revolution pointed to the importance of attending to the ethical and organizational dimensions of universities, adding: Religious elements committed to Islam and the Islamic system, who believe in the revolution and its aspirations with all their beings, should be empowered to work in the universities, and the management and organizational departments of universities could play an effective and important role in this respect.

He said that the officials and staff of the Ministry of Culture and Education were responsible for the Islamicization of universities, saying: The Islamicization of universities means a radical change which will be permanently recorded in the history of this country. In order to realize this objective, it is necessary to take a big, practical decision and to implement a correct, planned, legal, rational and calculated method.

Our universities today are not Islamic and they should become so. To achieve this there is an unavoidable need for a profound, radical, sympathetic, long-term, planned and all-round movement.

His Eminence Khamene'i also emphasized the need to strengthen the activities of the Supreme Islamic Revolution Council. [passage omitted]

The eminent leader strongly opposed the issue of the privatization of higher education, saying: Under the country's current situation, and in spite of foreign enemies and the weakness of academic and publicity output [as heard] in the country, the privatization of higher education is neither practical nor acceptable and no-one should plan for it.

On the question of whether students should continue their university educations abroad, the eminent leader said: I have doubts about this issue because if a young person can be taught by prominent teachers inside the country, why should she or he go abroad to study for their doctorates under non-experts. In this context, the officials of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education should present the right reasons for this task to continue.

Khamene'i considered that the insults hurled by some lecturers or by some irreligious and apathetic students at basiji students, who struggled so hard during the holy defense era [Iran-Iraq war], was disagreeable and unpleasant. He said: The officials of the Ministry of Culture and Education should dismiss those university lecturers who fight against the sanctities of the Islamic system and replace them with religious and faithful individuals who accept the aspirations and values of Iran's Muslim nation.

Today, in some universities, religious elements are being treated unkindly and you should stop this and direct the universities towards Islamic objectives while preserving their academic nature.

The eminent leader of the Islamic revolution, in conclusion, said that the existence of the offices of the representatives of the leader in universities were vital for the growth and the teaching of higher education. He stressed that it was important for those involved in higher education and in charge of universities to be united in their activities with these offices. [passage omitted]

Iran: Jannati Comments on Hajj, Saudi Restrictions

LD1705150696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian
0755 GMT 17 May 96

[First sermon of Tehran Friday prayers by Ahmad Jannati, senior member of the Guardian Council — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the Name of God, the merciful, the compassionate: [crowd chants: "Death to counterrevolutionaries and Zionism"] Fine, fine, please sit down. May God's peace and mercy be upon you all. [passage omitted]

I am going to devote the first sermon of this week's prayers to a short report on the hajj pilgrimage. This year I was in charge of running the Bi'thah [the representative office of Ayatollah Khamene'i] in Medina after the hajj rituals. I am grateful to almighty God for granting us this privilege of attending the hajj in the holy land of divine revelation, where the saints and the prophets worshipped. This year the hajj rituals enjoyed a special spiritual status. [passage omitted]

The disavowal rituals were performed better than last year. Despite the presence of Saudi Arabian forces and their control measures and restrictions imposed to prevent foreign pilgrims from going to certain places, the honorable Iranian and some non-Iranian pilgrims performed the rituals with the utmost glory and calm. Praise be to God for this. Of course, had they agreed, we would have organized the rituals in Mecca, and even inside the Bi'thah. However, they did not agree.

They are mainly frightened of seeing the non-Iranian pilgrims going to our Bi'thah. They fear that the cry and the message of our revolution — the message of the Prophet Abraham — may be heard by other pilgrims. This is their main fear and they exert pressure to impose limits. They wish to see us working within the four walls of our own Bi'thah. However, God does not wish to see our voice silenced or stopped from spreading beyond the Iranian borders. We, therefore, saw other pilgrims coming to join our pilgrims. They came among us to chant slogans. They accompanied us in various rituals and we chanted many slogans, just as we did last year. [passage omitted]

The slogans this year were perhaps more widespread and better calculated. When we were chanting the slogans, our friends who were involved in the process were saying that other nationalities were joining in and welcoming these slogans.

One cannot neglect the point that the revolutionary movement is, somehow, taking shape among Muslims. The domination of America and Israel over the Islamic countries and their bullying are questioned. The state of surrender — the silence and suppression that existed before — is changing. Even in Saudi Arabia itself, even the Salafis [movement which advocates going back to early traditions of Islam] — whose older generations' ideas are very strict and fossilized — are protesting. The young generation, the young religious students, are investigating the problems and raising questions. They show their protest by various means. Many are imprisoned, but the wave of revolution is gradually engulfing Saudi Arabia and spreading to other regions. This voice cannot be silenced, praise be to God.

Among other things, thanks be to God, the Komeyl prayers were also carried out properly there. On the Friday when I was in Medina, the Komeyl prayer was carried out properly under strict controls, while much filming was going on — the filming was somewhat impudent. [passage omitted]

At the same time, there are some silly restrictions that cannot be justified. Now, if they consider the touching of the shrine of the beloved Prophet as a precedent — which is a special issue that I will deal with... [pauses] When they see somebody is showing a plan and want to say where the tombs of the holy saints are, where the tombs of the wives of the Prophet are, and so forth, they stop that. Sometimes they arrest such a person for taking out a plan and showing it. The hajj pilgrims often do not know such things. There are no proper signs to let the pilgrims know what is where. I do not understand what is wrong with putting up signs next to the pure tombs of the saints. What catastrophe will happen? What precedent will it set? What blasphemy will it be? [passage omitted]

This year, one of their unreasonable restrictions was that besides confiscating the prayer books, they were confiscating the copies of the Koran as well. It seems that the official Koran is the one that has been printed in Saudi Arabia. That was a new issue this year.

As for other issues: Since we do not wish to be unfair and in order not to sidestep some facts, from the point of view of services, the water supply was good. There was constant and sufficient water, although that land is a dry land. The cleanliness in the shrines was very good. The services, especially in the mosques and the holy places, was quite good. However, there are some instances of poor taste. The situation on the paths to Moshat, Mena, and the Ram'ye Jamarat was so bad that anybody looking at a film of the dirt and appalling situation there will become pessimistic regarding Islam and Muslims and will say this is an indication of how all the Muslims of the world are. [passage omitted]

The last issue that I want to talk to you about is the imposition of Wahhabi ideas on all Muslims on earth. So many Muslims are living on earth. For centuries people have believed in a certain denomination, idea, jurisprudence, laws, traditions — in their prayers, in their recitations, in their laws. Now, no matter what, all must accept the Wahhabi ideology. This is creating precedents, this is polytheistic. What for? You may consider it polytheistic; other Muslims do not consider it to be so. What is the reason for the imposition of your ideas? Ruling the holy lands of Mecca and Medina means serving and offering service. They must prepare those places for the pilgrims and worshipers, cleanse them, and bring about a situation where all can go there to perform their duties. That is the duty of the government there. It has no right to interfere in the people's worship. It has no right to interfere in many things. It is an international Islamic center and the government there must merely offer services to those who wish to go there, carry out their worship, and return home. The imposition of ideas and bullying is really not commensurate with the principles and tenets of Islam. Islam broad-mindedly says that Jews and Christians in Islamic countries are free to use their churches and temples and carry out their religious traditions; that no-one is to interfere with them. There is all this liberality in Islam, and now the Muslims themselves, those who say there is no God but God, do not have the freedom in the land of the prophetic mission to carry out the edicts of their own sources of emulation and religious scholars. That is something that cannot be overlooked or tolerated in any way.

Let me make two brief points concerning ourselves. One is a prayer that I will say and you will answer amen to. O, God, bestow blessings here and now and in the hereafter on those jurisconsults who possess the conditions to issue fatwas but for your sake will not pen religious guidelines from now on. [crowd chants: "Amen"]

One of our problems is the problems of too many religious guidelines, especially concerning hajj rituals. An expert cleric, a hajj pilgrim, and a religious guide truly come up against problems. So much secondary detail and small issues concerning hajj ritual confuse everyone. Therefore, if for 10, 15, or 20 years no religious guidelines are written there will be no difficulties that need guidelines. I wish those who offer guidelines would actually pay a visit, under various condition, to Mecca and see what goes on there. Even watching a film on that is not enough. One's presence in that place will teach one many things and will give one a new jurisprudential outlook. That is why the Imam [Khomeyni] used to talk about the time and place. Conditions have a great effect on the understanding of the source of emulation, and that is absolutely separate from time and place. That is why it is better that those clerics somehow make the pilgrimage and then write about hajj rituals. Let them review their guidelines on the rituals, let them not advise caution all the time. Advising caution is not a simple matter — to say that it is better to repeat your prayer under certain conditions or circumambulate again out of caution. The pilgrim has enough trouble just to do his circumambulation properly; let alone when, by issuing a caution, one puts him to even more. Anyway we hope that this is going to be observed. [passage omitted]

Iran: Jannati Friday Prayers Second Sermon

LD1705165496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0815 GMT 17 May 96

[Friday prayers second sermon by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, member of the Iranian Guardian Council in Tehran — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

Today it is up to this generation to protect its religion, Islam. During each period Muslims, led by their Islamic leaders, are duty- bound to safeguard the sanctity of religion. Religion has always had its enemies, it has had enemies during any period. We know of no prophet who had no enemies. [passage omitted]

When values are being threatened, then any person who possesses the least religious sentiment should be moved strongly, not remain silent, and feel for his religion, Islam, the people, the oppressed and deprived.

Why should southern Lebanon and the entire Islamic country of Lebanon become the subject of aggression in such a manner? What a big sin is it to remain silent towards this act of aggression and atrocity. And what is amazing is that this year, in the hajj ceremonies, there was an effort to prevent even this from being mentioned.

What is the reason for this? Why should it not be mentioned? At a time when a number of people are going round the House of God and others are worshipping and praying in the holy mosque — another lot are at the same time rolling in dust and blood because of Israel's bombings. Why should this not be mentioned? Why should they not shout and cry out loud? This is the least that one can do. This is the least support that one can give to the oppressed and to show one's hostility towards the oppressor. One should not tolerate these things.

In any case, the circumstances under which we find ourselves, especially in this territory, are exceptional ones. That is, every committed, alert individual has to be responsible to the extent that a demi-prophet [nimeh-payambar] is responsible, and should safeguard the realm of Islam; recognize the plots of the enemy in their different guises and foil these plots to the extent that he or she has the power to do so as an individual and as a collective member of society. [crowd chants: God is great, Death to America, Death to Israel].

The history of Ashura showed us very clearly that 23 hours of fighting and the martyrdom of some of the finest individuals in the wars of Uhud, Badr, Ahzab, and others, the flight of refugees, the displacements and the unimaginable endeavors of the great prophet of Islam — everything that had been achieved was all of a sudden faced by the threat of complete destruction due to negligence and carelessness. I repeat, complete destruction. That is, all of a sudden, the rule of the Ummayyads — who were inherently pagan, had theirs roots in the Jahiliyah [period before victory of Islam] era and had not absorbed Islam but accepted it out of fear. They came and sat at the memorial dinner given for the martyrs of the wars of Uhud and Badr and turned it into a merry party where they drank wine and discussed the division of the inheritance of Islam's martyrs. This was barely half a century after the demise of the prophet of Islam.

This means that it is possible to do such things and there are opportunists who, whenever a reformist and religious movement emerges, confront it as much as they can. When they realize they cannot defeat it, they surrender temporarily and then, when the situation calms down, they try to get rid of those leaders, soldiers and devotees and to claim and plunder the latter's inheritance. The Ashura event showed up this fact very clearly.

Now, was this just a specific event to do with that period of history? Was it not repeated and will it never be repeated? Is not the Islamic revolution threatened in this manner? Are not the fundamentals and values of Islam and revolution threatened in this way? If they are — and we should all admit that they are — then what should we do? What is our duty? What are the duties of the ulema, universities, students, and committed Muslims everywhere? America's complex and widespread conspiracies did not exist in those days but, now, we are facing these on top of the rest of it. This is just the prologue of the whole story.

Apart from opportunists there are also those who are endeavoring to snuff the light out so that they may celebrate, drink their wines and laugh at our basiji and hezbollahi boys and at the martyrs, the former POW's and the Selfless Devotees [war disabled]. These people are waiting for such a day and the others are prodding them on. So, what should we do now? Should we not think that we have a duty towards this situation? [passage omitted].

What do they mean by raising certain irrelevant questions and saying some very trivial things, turning these into issues of the day. They set religion against worldly things; religion against materialistic progress and vice-versa, thus raising some strange and ridiculous issues for our present times. This is really pitiful.

If such issues were being raised by Muslims who had fallen by the wayside as far as Islam's teachings were concerned, one would not be so surprised. But, it is disgraceful to raise them in this country where the culture of 'Id al-Qadir, Ashura, the culture of the Household of the Prophet and that of the genuine Koran, of the revolution and of the Imam [Khomeyni] — may his soul be admitted to paradise — are sovereign, and in a country which is led by a jurisconsult who is a source of emulation. [crowd chants: God is Great]

One shudders even to hear that such issues are raised in that country. A religion which cannot stand progress, or even opposes progress, is not a proper religion. However, any progress, which intends to discard religion, is in fact a step backward. It may be called progress, but in fact it takes the country back by hindering development. Only when progress moves in parallel with religion, will it be true progress which will serve the interests of the people. Islam is such a religion. Was it not Islam which promoted science and encouraged technical development in the past? It created a new civilization which could have transformed the world into a flower garden forever. Alas, Islam fell into the hands of the incompetent. Islam achieved a lot.

Today, thanks to His Eminence Imam Khomeyni's instructions, his messages, his written work and his recorded teachings... [pauses] Truly one should not overlook these words. Scientists in particular, university academic staff and Muslim students should feel obliged to safeguard Islamic values. This generation should move forward, shoulder to shoulder, with the seminarians and the religious ulema. They should defend the sanctity of Islam and the Muslims in this arena. This is what we expect from the young generation.

We must be very alert. I particularly recommend this to our dear students. I would like to ask them to be alert and prevent infiltration of ill-intentioned opportunists. One could find such characters everywhere. Be careful that they do not mislead you. Make sure they do not brainwash you by distorting facts. These problems are particularly important in universities. [passage omitted]

Next week coincides with the week of proclaiming virtue and prohibiting vice. The vice and virtue squads have performed very well. I do not have the time to give a list of their achievements. But I assure you that had it not been for the hard work of these squads, the basiji and the hezbollahi, our fate would have been different. They control matters today. Of course, their moves should be highly calculated. They should avoid giving an excuse to the enemy. Biased individuals should be deprived of propaganda fodder. But our movement must go forward in full strength. Ultimately we must have some people whose every thought and concern concentrate on safeguarding the revolution, divine commandments and values of the revolution. [passage omitted]

Iran: Qom Prayer Leader Calls Railroad Link Honor

LD1705152596 Tehran IRNA in English
1511 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, May 17, IRNA — Friday prayer leader of the holy city of Qom, Ayatollah Amini, described the inauguration of Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tedzhen railroad link as an honor for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Touching on the positive results of the giant project, Ayatollah Amini stated that the railway track disappoints the enemies of Islam in their impotency of failing to isolate the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the eve of the month of Moharram, Qom's Friday prayer leader called on preachers to shed light on the goals of Imam Husayn's (AS) [peace be upon him] revolution.

Ayatollah Amini also elaborated on the Islamic way of spending the public treasury of Muslims in an Islamic society and said the life-style of Imam 'Ali (AS) is the best model for Muslims to follow in this respect.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto—India Has Morally, Politically Lost Kashmir

BK1905095396 Islamabad THE NATION in English
18 May 96 p 14

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that India has morally and politically lost the Held Kashmir by resorting to State terrorism to crush the freedom struggle.

"This is State terrorism at its most despicable, and because of this, India has morally and politically lost

Kashmir," she wrote in her syndicate column appearing on Thursday titled, "Say no to terrorism."

She said tens of thousands of people in Jammu and Kashmir have been killed at the hands of the "brutal Indian State." Twenty-two killed in the Valley, she said, is the kind of headline that has become a daily routine for Kashmir. Moreover, the Prime Minister said bodies of innocent Kashmiris are discovered daily brutally tortured and thrown away with utter disregard by the Indian security forces.

Special laws in Indian-held Kashmir, she said, give the Indian security forces licence to arrest, torture, rape or kill a Kashmiri without any accountability. She said Indian brutal use of State terrorism, "forced some (Kashmiris) to turn to militancy as a means of last resort."

Bhutto said, "my life has been struck by terrorism in many forms — terrorism from faceless gangs, terrorism sponsored by foreign lands and terrorism by the hand of a ruthless dictatorship in my own country."

She said, "my father, Prime Minister of Pakistan, was executed by terrorists unleashed in the name of the State against the common people."

She said it was a loss that gave her determination to challenge all forms of terrorism, no matter under what pretext those acts were committed. "To me, terrorism can only be described as an exhibition of mindless violence against innocent people — there can never be proper justification for such acts." She said the terrorism can never match the overwhelming power that comes from the will and determination of people. She said the developing nations can overcome the problems facing them by winning the hearts and minds of the people, "and not the impact of a bomb."

The Prime Minister said the militants trained in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation of that country believed that they had single-handedly beaten the erstwhile superpower and, "that violence could solve any and all problems," "it is our duty to prove that they are mistaken."

She said Pakistan has been target of numerous bomb blasts and random killings by terrorist gangs during the Afghan war to dissuade Islamabad from its position.

Later, she said the Afghan war veterans from other Muslim countries had started their own brand of terrorism "using Pakistani soil to stage extremist activities in other parts of the world.

"But Pakistan survived the terrorism of these foreign agents because the minds and the hearts of our people were strong," she said and added, "we cleaned up Pakistan, extraditing terrorists and expelling extremists who would shed innocent blood."

Citing the example of Karachi, the Prime Minister wrote the port city, "my birthplace and a former stronghold of extremist elements," has been made peaceful once more. "This success was not without a price, however, as 250 policemen and 175 members of my party lost their lives in the struggle."

Pakistan: Prime Minister Urges India To Abandon Kashmir Elections

BK1905081896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has urged the Indian prime minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to take initiative to lessen tension in the South Asian region by resolving the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to newsmen in Gilgit yesterday, she hoped that the new Indian leadership would put talks with Pakistan back on track on resolving the issues, including Kashmir. Ms. Benazir Bhutto stressed that Jammu and Kashmir problem must be resolved to ensure durable peace in the region and that the Kahsmir issue should be on top of the agenda for talks between the two countries.

The prime minister called upon the Indian Government to abandon the plan to hold elections in held Kashmir and said it should hold dialogue with All Parties Hurriyat Conference leadership to pave the way for resolution of the issue. Ms. Benazir Bhutto said it is the responsibility of the leaders to play their role for establishing peace in the region. The Indian leadership must review its policies so as to end the prevailing stalemate in the region.

Replying to a question, the prime minister said Pakistan is a peaceful country and wishes to see South Asia a nuclear-free region.

Pakistan: Further on Prime Minister's Remarks on Kashmir Elections

BK1905113896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 19 May 96 pp 1, 9

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gilgit — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Saturday asked the new Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee not to go for 'farcical election' in held Kashmir rather include the issue in Indo-Pak talks.

Talking to journalists, the Prime Minister said, "I would like to congratulate Vajpayee on his nomination and hope that he will give the whole situation in the region a review. I also hope that he will take initiative to put Indo-Pak talks back on the track."

Responding to a question regarding BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] extremist demands, Ms Bhutto said, "BJP is a coalition government, and I too. I know it is like waking up in the morning with a cold shower. So I hope that many of their extremist demands will tamper by the fact that it's a coalition government."

She said both the governments had different agenda as far as signing of Controlling [as published] Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), proliferation of nuclear weapons, and of course, elections in held Kashmir, were concerned. "BJP is sworn up to sign the CTBT. We would like to see it signed subject to their's. BJP believes in nuclear weapon policy but we would like to work for South Asia be a nuclear free region. And BJP wants to hold farcical election in Kashmir." She hoped that BJP would postpone the election in Kashmir and instead would call the All Parties Hurriyat Conference to talks.

"Vajpayee has been a foreign minister, I think he has a lot of experience to do his job and can recognize the repercussion of events, perhaps others may not do so. I wish him best," the Prime Minister said. On a query the Prime Minister said that BJP leadership was new to the job. They would take time to familiarise with the regional situation, and she hoped, that being a big country they would take initiative to reduce the tension in the region and the stalemate of Kashmir. "Despite coalition government, it is the responsibility of BJP's leadership to prosper their people and make sure that they should live without fear. They should work for the regional peace. And they should review the Kashmir issue which is the bone of contention between two countries," the Prime Minister urged upon the newly-elected BJP leadership.

Earlier, addressing a gathering on the occasion of ground- breaking ceremony of up-gradation of Karakorum Highway (first phase) in Jaglot Saturday morning, Prime Minister Benazir' Bhutto said that the development of Karakoram Highway (KKH) was a reflection of strong commitment of her government to accelerate the pace of progress and strengthen the communication network for trade links with China and Central Asian states.

She said the Karakoram Highway, the 8th wonder of the world, was the realisation of the dream seen by Z A Bhutto, twenty-six years ago.

The ground-breaking ceremony was also addressed by the representatives of China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, besides Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas Mohammad Afzal Khan.

Benazir Bhutto said the country has been put on the road of progress, adding "real development could only be done by a democratic government." She pointed out the journey of progress was disturbed in 1977 and constitution was abrogated. This led to closure of development activities. History witness to the fact, she added, democracy has been the best system for achieving the goal of national development.

Benazir Bhutto highlighted the economic priorities of her government and the development programmes with particular reference to Northern Areas. She also mentioned about those who are creating hindrance in the development activities for political motives.

Paying tributes to the valour of the people of Northern Areas, she said, they rendered remarkable services for the development of Pakistan. The people's government, she said, will take every possible step for bringing the people of these areas educationally, socially and economically at par with the rest of the country.

Transport minister of Kazakhstan Moukhamedzbanov Kanat Sakenovich [name as published] noted that Pakistan is modernising its communication network to meet the future needs. He hoped, the Karakoram Highway will prove to be an effective source of trade between Pakistan and Kazakhstan and we will be able to be introduced with the social and cultural values of each other. Transport minister of Kyrgyzstan Raimkulov Hrdyk Imashevich [name as published] said it was pleasing that pragmatic endeavours are underway for establishment of highway links between Pakistan, China, and Central Asian states and that the Karakoram Highway will be used for this purpose. He said, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is not only the leader of Pakistan, but she is also held in high esteem among the people of Kyrgyzstan and that her interest in the upgradation and rehabilitation project of the KKH shows her strong commitment for early start of international trade traffic in the region.

Chinese economic counselor Fu Guangting said Sino-Pak friendship is everlasting and time tested. He said an effective communication link is already established between two neighbouring countries and that the upgradation of the Karakoram Highway will extend the range of trade activities.

Meanwhile, inaugurating a steel suspension bridge, which will link a population of about 70,000 of Gupis and Yaseen valleys, the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Saturday announced a development package worth Rs [rupees] 1.34 billion for the under-developed northern areas aimed at providing the people with basic necessities of life.

She said the amount will be used in the sectors of power generation, education, health, agriculture, housing and communication. She announced that the people of the area over the next three months would be given about three thousand jobs.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Rejects Vajpayee's Claim Over Azad Kashmir

BK1705160196 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 May 96 pp 1, 9

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali strongly rejecting Indian claims over AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] said Kashmir is a disputed territory by UN charter and India is illegally occupying Jammu and Kashmir.

"Pakistan will approach the UN Security Council should India try to change this disputed status," Aseff said talking to APP on Thursday.

Reacting to the statement of Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee that "Pakistan occupies the AJK, which really and rightfully belongs to India," Aseff said, "it is not Pakistan but certainly India who is maintaining unlawful occupation over Jammu and Kashmir, by all standards of international law. Kashmir is the disputed territory according to the charter of United Nations too," he added.

Answering a question on the news appearing in a section of the press quoting Vajpayee as saying that "India will regain AJK militarily," Aseff said, "We are fully capable of defending each and every inch of Pakistan."

He also expressed concern over the admission of BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] chief that Babri Mosque in Ayodhya was rightfully demolished and his party will construct a Ram Temple in its place. Aseff said, "if true, it is unfortunate and does not sound good to us. If BJP-lead government transforms its statements over temple- mosque issue into reality, India is bound to land in troubled waters."

On the formation of BJP-dominated government at Delhi, Aseff said, it is not our concern as to who forms a government. It is their internal matter. "However, we hope that the new Indian authorities will protect Muslims and resolve the Kashmir issue peacefully." Aseff also invited India for talks to solve the core issues between the two countries.

The hard-line position of BJP on contentious issues will not serve any purpose except raising tension between the two neigbours and big members of the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation], he added. "We want peace with India but on equal basis," he added.

Regarding contradictory reports about the killing of Western hostages and claim of Al-Faran that it had handed them over to the Indian Army, Aseff said, the Western countries were not holding India responsible and their attitude towards her was apologetic.

However, he added, "Pakistan said right from the beginning that they were kidnapped by the Indian sponsored UN-known Al-Faran to malign freedom fighters organisations. We are confident that truth will ultimately come to the fore and India will be exposed for this drama."

Pakistan: Opposition Leader Cautions New Indian Premier on Kashmir

BK1805094896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, federal minister for information and broadcasting, has asked the opposition leader to refrain from creating misunderstanding on issues of national importance. In a statement issued in Islamabad yesterday, he said Nawaz Sharif's accusation that the government is interfering in Azad Kashmir's affairs will hurt the national interests. The information minister said the opposition leader should realize the seriousness of the situation in occupied Kashmir, where India is trying to mislead world opinion through so-called elections.

Opposition leader Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has asked the Indian prime minister to eschew issuing irresponsible statements on Kashmir as it may damage peace efforts in the region. Addressing party workers in Lahore yesterday, he asked the government to take serious notice of Mr. Vajpayee's statement on Kashmir. Sharif said the whole world knows that Indian-occupied Kashmir is disputed territory. He said the struggle of the Kashmiri people has entered a decisive phase and they will be free from the clutches of Indian forces.

Jamaat-i-Islami Chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed has appealed that the people observe 23 May as a black day in solidarity with the Kashmiri Muslims, who have decided to boycott the so-called elections in the occupied valley. In a statement in Lahore yesterday, he described the Kashmiri elections, for seats in India's Lok Sabha, as a drama being staged in the presence of more than 600,000 Indian troops.

Pakistan: Opposition Leader Warns Against 'Interference in AJK'

BK1705145796 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 May 96 p 12

[Report by Kosar Naqvi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abbottabad — Opposition leader Mian Nawaz Sharif has warned the government of dire consequences if it continued with its "interference in AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] affairs."

"Such meddling in the political affairs of Azad Kashmir can damage the Kashmir cause and will have a negative effect," he remarked, while talking to a group of journalists at a dinner hosted by Jehanzeb Khan, member of FPCCI [Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry], at the Frontier House here Wednesday night.

He said the federal government was now ready to indulge in massive horse trading in Azad Kashmir, after having introduced it in Pakistan.

Nawaz, who was on a day's trip to Hazara division to address a public meeting at Battagram in connection with the election campaign in NA-16 was accompanied by MPA's [Member of Provincial Assembly] from Hazara Yousaf Ayub Khan, Sabir Shah, Sardar Ghulam Nabi, Ayub Afridi and Tariq Swati besides provincial as well as local PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)] leaders including Saranjam Khan, Syed Ali Shah, Ali Afzal Jadoon, Javed Abbasi, Kamran Ahmad and Riaz Khan.

Nawaz bitterly criticised the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] regime and said it had failed to solve people's problems. "They have given nothing to the nation except price hike, unemployment, corruption and lawlessness and have not initiated a single worthwhile project for the welfare of tile [as published] people" he said, adding that every citizen seemed to be disappointed.

The PML(N) chief announced that tickets for the forthcoming elections would be awarded only on merit and not to the rich and wealthy. "Only the right person for the job will get the ticket to weed out unemployment and poverty," he observed.

Meanwhile, addressing a public meeting at Battagram, Nawaz criticised the government for the price hike. He asked the people- to cast their vote in favour of the PML(N) candidate.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Gohar Ayub, Ejazul Haq, Ahmad Raza Qasuri, Pir Sabir Shah, Sardar Yousaf, Maulana Syed Chiraghuddin Shah and PML(N) candidate Nawaz Khan. Nawaz also offered fateha [prayers] at the residence of Tariq Swati MPA on the death of his brother-in-law.

Pakistan: Kashmiri Leaders Call For Total Strike on Election Days

BK1705144096 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, as Indian Government deployed more troops for sham elections, All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC] has given a call for total strike in the valley, Udhampur, and Doda districts from Tuesday to Friday. The people have been asked to remain indoors and make sure that transport remains off the road. APHC leaders also appealed to the people for complete boycott of the polling for Baramula, Islamabad, and Srinagar, Udhampur constituencies on 23d and 30th May.

All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders have expressed their outrage over the remarks of the new Indian prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, that the poll drama would be staged in occupied Kashmir. A senior leader of the APHC, Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lone, said the Indian prime minister's remarks were testimony of the fact that the Indian leadership was incapable of adopting a realistic attitude toward the Kashmir dispute.

Meanwhile, despite threats by the occupation authorities, the employees strike continued for the fourth day today, paralyzing life in the valley, and government offices and institutions remained closed. Observers say that India has sent so much additional armed forces for the polls ploy that the entire valley has been turned into a virtual military camp. All office? and schools and college buildings have been occupied by military forces and the menacing military presence is a dominant sight everywhere on roads, in the streets and the lanes. In Shupiyan area, the troops are reported to have been indulging in robbing houses of carpets and other valuables and threatening people of the area against boycotting elections.

Pakistan: Statement Condemns Indian 'Attacks' on Kashmiri Leaders

BK1605151596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 16 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has strongly condemned the heinous attacks of the Indian forces on the top leadership of the Kashmir movement. A statement by the Foreign Office in Islamabad says the intimidation of Kashmiri leadership for raising voice against repression in occupied Kashmir could never reduce their resolve to achieve the right of self-determination. However, such acts reflect the fact that Indian authorities have become unnerved by the total rejection of the Indian plans of holding farcical elections. The statement calls upon the world community to note fresh Indian attempts to eliminate the Kashmiri leadership. It urges India to end its repression in the occupied territory and allow Kashmiris their inalienable right to self-determination.

The Foreign Ministry statement recalls reports that half a dozen armed persons had attacked the convoy of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference on Friday last. The convoy was on way to Kupwara for door-to-door anti-election campaign. In the attack, prominent Kashmiri leaders Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lone and Abdul Wahid Waza were injured. On their way back to Srinagar, a hand grenade was thrown on the motorcade at Narabal, which destroyed one of the vehicles.

Pakistan: BJP Government Seen Drawing World Scrutiny

BK1905124996 Islamabad THE NATION in English 19 May 96 p 6

[Article by Mushahid Hussain: "Indian Scenario Plus for Pakistan"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The election results in India and the emergence of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee, as the country's Prime Minister mark a new phase and direction in Indian politics as that country enters its 50th year as an independent state. Whether the BJP-led government survives or not, one thing is quite evident from these recent developments in India that these events are a watershed of sorts underlining an identity of India anchored essentially in Hinduism. As the BJP President, Lal Krishan Advani, told an American newspaper on May 15: "We are committed to secularism, but that should not mean that the country disowns its personality. Essentially, it is Hindu."

Interestingly, the Indian election results seem to have shocked all those apologists of Indian "secular democracy", particularly India's own elite, who used to present India as an "island of liberalism in a sea of fundamentalism."

Then there has been a whole bunch of naive Pakistanis who perceived India as a bulwark against what was termed as "religious extremism", who based their arguments on the erroneous premise that "extremism and fundamentalism fomented from Pakistan fuelled similar thinking in India."

Probably the Indian election results have also sent shock waves across influential section of opinion and policymakers in the West for whom the terms "fundamentalism and religious extremism" were synonymous with Islam and Muslims. Needless to say, such mythology has already been shattered by a series of events in the last year: the Oklahoma bombing by Christian extremists, the assassination of Rabin by a Jewish religious fanatic, and the victory of Shiv Sena in India's most cosmopolitan and "liberal" city, Bombay, headed by a leader who publicly adores and idolises Adolf Hitler as a role model.

It is such mythology which is reflected in policies that become selective in application on issues such as terrorism. In the State Department's listing of seven countries that are said to be "terrorist states", five happen to be Muslim, although Israeli state terrorism in Lebanon, Indian state terrorism in Occupied Kashmir and Russian state terrorism in Chechnya are invariably ignored.

Ironically, the election results in India and the emergence of the BJP as the single largest party which has now been asked to form the government, may be positive from Pakistan's perspective since India now would be the focus of international, particularly Western attention. For too long, Pakistan has been a victim of injustice and at the receiving end of pressures or issues where India should have been the target of international censure. Some examples:

— India has already detonated a nuclear bomb way back in 1974, but Pakistan which never conducted a nuclear test, has been penalised for allegedly making the bomb through sanctions imposed via the Pressler Amendment;

— India conducted tests of the intermediate range "Agni" missile as well as the shorter range Pakistan-specific "Prithvi" missile but it is Pakistan which was slapped with sanctions for allegedly receiving M-11 missiles from China, while no sanctions have been imposed on India;

— India has been brutal in killing the Kashmiris and like the Serbs in Bosnia, its 600,000-strong Occupation Army has even used the rape of Muslim women as a political weapon, but it is Pakistan which is accused of fomenting terrorism in Occupied Kashmir;

— India demolished the Babri Mosque in December 1992, and a month later, Bombay went through a vicious round of anti-Muslim riots which even The New York Times compared to ethnic cleansing of the Muslims in Bosnia but it is Pakistan which is accused of persecution of its religious minorities;

— India's symbols of its military might like "Agni" and "Prithvi", are taken from Hindu mythology which are meant to create a certain pride and resonance among India's predominantly Hindu population but it is the Pakistan Army which is accused of having "fundamentalists" in its ranks.

India was somehow exempt from all pressures, censure or sanctions because it was a "liberal secular democracy" which could checkmate Communist China to its north and Muslim Pakistan to its west, hence the hypocrisy of treating India's nuclear bomb as somehow being more "peaceful" than Pakistan's mythical "Islamic Bomb". However, with the emergence of the BJP in India, the cloak of hypocrisy adorned by the Congress has finally been shed.

Two other factors are noteworthy in this regard. There is the potential threat to America's regional agenda posed by the BJP victory and there is a broader issue of the changing character of Indian politics and the Indian state. The US would be concerned about the BJP not because of what the BJP stands for, but the repercussions of an India ruled by the BJP, particularly for Pakistan, which has been the focal point of US concern and attention in the last couple of decades as far as the nuclear issue in South Asia goes.

This American concern is similar to Washington efforts in certain areas as well. For example, the US concern regarding North Korea's nuclear programme was essentially premised on the fear that should North Korea go nuclear, Japan would invariably follow suit. Or the implications that Yeltsin's defeat in the Russian Presidential elections at the hands of the neo-fascist Zhirinovskiy or the Communist Zyuganov would have for Russia's neighbours. Or the possibility that a Likud victory in the Israeli parliamentary elections would embolden the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], weaken 'Arafat and raise alarm bells among those Arab countries which have normalised relations with Israel.

Hence, the greater fear in Washington is what implications the emergence of a BJP-led India would have on Pakistan, particularly on such key issues of America's long-standing regional agenda as a compromise on Kashmir (which it wants essentially on the Palestinian model of autonomy), normalisation of Pakistan-India relations and softening of India's stand regarding signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). One example of this concern was when soon after election results were pouring in on May 9, there was a long discussion on the CNN with America's prominent nuclear expert, Dr Leonard Spector, on what a BJP victory would mean for India's nuclear and missile programme, with an accent on its implications for Pakistan.

The other aspect of the Indian election results is a pointer to the growing brittleness of the Indian state. There is an unmistakable trend towards the Hinduisation and militarisation of India. One-third of the Indian army is combating insurgences. The virtual demise of India's "elected dynasty" has weakened the Congress to such an extent that today it has reached its nadir politically for the first time in 50 years. India is also facing its biggest corruption scandal in history.

If the Hindus today are seeking an identity rooted in their religion, so are the Sikhs and the Muslims. Whether the BJP government stays in power or not the Hindu factor in Indian politics looms large and India is now in for a period of instability. This should be a plus for India's smaller neighbours, particularly Pakistan, for it gives Pakistan a breather, for India will now have an inward-looking approach trying to tackle contentious issues. A stable and strong India has always been a minus for Pakistan, while a weak and unstable India is a plus for Pakistan and other South Asian countries, since in this situation India will be too busy wrestling with its own internal problems and crises.

A BJP government in India also provides Pakistan an opportunity to discard its overly defensive and indeed apologetic approach on such issues as Pakistan's Islamic identity, our position on Kashmir and the need for the nuclear programme as a deterrence against India's growing military might. A BJP-led India is both a challenge and opportunity for Pakistan. A challenge to match India's military might with reciprocity in developing our conventional and nuclear deterrence, and an opportunity to put India on the defensive internationally on issues on which Pakistan has been apologetic for too long.

Pakistan: Imran Khan Says 'No' to Secular System

BK1705152296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 17 May 96 p 12

[Report by THE NATION correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — Chief of Tehrik-e-Insaaf Imran Khan said that Pakistan was established in the name of Islam and there is no room for a secular system in this country. He reaffirmed that he wants to reform the existing democratic system and favours change through a democratic way instead of becoming a puppet at the hands of oppressors.

This he said while responding to a question in the Meet the Press programme of Peshawar Press Club on Thursday.

Imran Khan on the second leg of his tour to NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] arrived here Thursday morning.

Imran Khan said that while collecting donations for cancer hospital he came to know that majority of the people are disappointed due to the increasing corruption, social injustices and maltreatment of the monopolist politicians. Keeping in view, he said, wishes and expectations of the downtrodden masses of the country, he introduced Tehrik Insaaf.

He said that basic objectives of his movement are to gather the oppressed masses on one platform and to enable them to get rid of oppressors and corrupt system.

When diverted his attention towards reports that he is favouring secular system of government, Imran Khan said that Pakistan was established in the name of Islam and there is no room for secularism. He added that he favours strengthening of the Islamic ideology but it should be according to democratic process. He said that Islamic ideology is the identity of Pakistan and he would utilise all his capabilities for its protection.

Highlighting objective of Tehrik Insaaf, Imran Khan said that it was established when all institutions are near to collapse due to corruption and the masses were disappointed with the politicians. He made it clear that he will never become a puppet in the hands of establishment and will come into power through a democratic way.

He was astonished over the statement of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in which she claimed, "There is no corruption in the country while price hike has been controlled". He suggested that the prime minister to came to general public and listen to their grievances regarding corruption and price hike. In fact, he said that neither PPP [Pakistan People's Party] is a democratic force nor its leaders allow elections, therefore, Benazir Bhutto is unaware about corruption and price hike. She would come to know about impacts of corruption and price hike on common people when she allows elections in her own party, he remarked. He claimed that with the support of his like minded people he would bring about a change in the country through democratic ways.

When diverted his attention towards rejected, disheartened and disgruntled politicians from Frontier Province joining him, Imran Khan said that doors of Tehrik Insaaf are open for every one but in leadership he would place honest sincere people. He said that after his mass contact campaign, he would organise the party. The organisation process will be completed in a period from three to five months. He made it clear that he would not impose corrupt leadership on the workers of his movement.

He believes in chanced reforms and would do the job at any cost, he said adding that PPP leadership is worried about his political struggle therefore, earlier, the PPP government imposed ban on fund raising drive for his cancer hospital through electronic media and now it is creating problems for him. He said that he wants to utilise Pakistani talent both internally and externally for getting the objectives of changes and reforms of all institutions.

Pakistan: Imran Khan — Friendship With U.S. Based on 'Begging'

BK1705034596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 16 May 96 p 1

[Report by THE NEWS correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — Imran Khan said on Wednesday that the friendship between Pakistan and the United States is based on begging.

"A friendship is based on equality and not on begging and donations. There is no question of Pak-American friendship," Imran said.

Addressing writers and intellectuals at a function organized by the Pakistan Writers' Council at Lahore Press Club, Khan said that during the SKMT [expansion unknown] fund-raising campaign a civil servant alleged that he (Khan) was teaching begging to the children. He said this infuriated him but he controlled himself and only said, "It is better to rely on ourselves than on the US.

He said it is his firm belief that Pakistan and its people have tremendous potential. He said that although the press is playing a vital role in exposing corruption scandals, nothing has happened to the democratic government.

He said that when people ask about his program he simply tells them that he has launched a reform movement to eliminate corruption.

He said, "We are very careful in the selection of our Thereek's office-bearers and that is why we have so far chosen only one office-bearer after a very tight and thorough scrutiny."

He said another 3 to 4 office-bearers will be passed by the scrutiny committee in a few days and if they manage to get 15 people through this process then the movement would gain the desired momentum. "If we manage to win people's confidence, we would sweep the parliament."

Pakistan: Bhutto—No More 'Terrorist Elements' in Country

BK1805085696 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 May 96 p 2

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that foreign governments needed not to worry as her country had gotten rid of all "terrorist elements" hunted by other countries.

In an interview to an Arabic weekly, AL WASAT, Cairo, Premier Bhutto said that Peshawar and other Pakistani cities "are free of terrorist elements". "True, a number of extremists came to Pakistan during the Afghan war (against Soviet occupation), but our government has compelled them to return to their home countries," she said.

"I no longer see any reason for worry by foreign governments. One of the first steps my government took was a crackdown on those residing in Pakistan illegally, and consequently some of them left Pakistan for European countries or Afghanistan," she said.

The Egyptian Government had claimed that Egyptian militants, living in Pakistan, were linked to the extremists, waging a campaign of anti-government violence in Egypt.

Numan Galal, Egypt's ambassador here, had told AL WASAT last week that 2,000 veterans of the Afghan conflict, 40 percent of them Egyptians, were living in the Pakistani town of Peshawar, near the Afghan border. But Galal did not say if Cairo had demanded extradition of any Egyptian veteran as under the terms of an extradition treaty, signed by the two countries last year, Pakistan had turned about 10 veterans over to the Egypt Government.

Benazir called for more extradition treaties, saying: "It is impossible for one or two states to combat terrorism on their own since it has become a worldwide phenomenon."

Pakistan: Defense Minister Says 'No Danger' of War With India

BK1905095596 Islamabad THE NATION in English 18 May 96 p 10

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shikarpur — Despite change of government in India, there was no danger of Indo-Pak war, however, our armed forces were alert and fully capable to meet any challenge.

This was stated by the Federal Minister for Defence Aftab Shaban Mirani while talking to newsmen on Friday [17 May]. To a question Mr Mirani said elections in Indian Held Kashmir was not solution of the problem, only exercise of right of self- determination could resolve the issue as envisaged in the resolutions of the United Nations. To another question, the Minister rejected any possibility of mid-term elections and said the government would complete its constitutional tenure.

Earlier, the Minister inaugurated electricity and boys primary school in village Agha Lal Khan Pathan and other boys primary school in village Ayub Jhulhan in district Shikarpur.

Addressing on the occasion Mr Mirani said under the Social Action Plan of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto civic eminities will be provided to the large section of the population of rural as well as urban areas. He said in his constituency out of 79 sanctioned villages electricity has been provided to 54 villages and remaining villages will be supplied before the end of current financial year. At the same time 7 out of 13 sanctioned schools have been constructed and remaining 6 will be completed before next financial year.

Pakistan: Defense Minister on 'Deterrent' to Prithvi, Other Issues

BK1905124896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 19 May 96 pp 1, 13

[Report by Lahore correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Defence Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani has said there is no threat to the national security and Pakistan possesses deterrent to counter Indian Prithvi missiles or any other external aggression.

Talking to newsmen at Chamber House after addressing an open kutchery [gathering] of the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] workers. Mirani deliberated on various issues concerning the national security, defence capability of the country and defence budget.

The Minister said the induction of new government in India posed no serious threat to Pakistan and declared recent statement of Indian Premier Atal Behari Vajpayee regarding conquering Azad Kashmir as a mere political stunt to muster the support of various political forces for his government.

Replying to a question, he said our frontiers are well-guarded and no Indian government can dare attack us and in case New Delhi ever tries to impose war on us it will have to face what he termed 'a crushing defeat'.

Mirani was of the view that elections in India would not make any difference for us because which ever party would come in power there would remain hostile towards Pakistan. He reiterated his stance that Pakistan had the capability to defend its geographical frontiers.

About the possibility of any reduction in the defence expenditure in the forthcoming national budget, he said having 2000-kilometer- long border with a hostile country we have to consider and fulfill demands regarding our defence needs. Said he: "The defence budget could only be curtailed when our frontiers are free from any external threat".

To another question, the Defence Minister said efforts were being made to procure fighters compatible to the F-16s and for this purpose a number of teams comprising defence experts have gone abroad. But he was reluctant to disclose the names of those countries on the plea that India might influence them not to supply fighters to Pakistan.

The Minister did not deem it necessary to answer a question pertaining to the reported purchase of ring magnets from China because he said all reports appearing in the Press have proved incorrect. Mirani agreed with a questioner that Pakistan needs to remain alert as it has over 2200 kilometer long borders with India and Afghanistan — 1300 kilometers with the former and 900 with the latter.

He contradicted allegation about any attack by the ISI [Inter Service Intelligence] on Senator Mehmood Khan Achkazai. So far as the arrest of PPP MNA [Member of National Assembly] Aziz Memon is concerned, he said it took place on the charges of corruption against him and the credit goes to the present government for not sparing corrupt elements in the ruling party, something which had never happened in the past.

Earlier addressing the open Kutchery the Defence Minister said the present government would provide residential plots to all the PPP men and would use all available resources to ameliorate the lot of the poor. On this occasion angry party workers apprised the Minister of the treatment meted out to them by the party leaders and Provincial Ministers.

The one complaint made by the party workers in all such open kutcheries was that the PPP culture has changed altogether and the party was now in the control of the 'Paktel-Pajero Mafia' which ignored the committed workers and took no interest in redressing their grievances. He assured the workers that their complaints would be conveyed to the Party high command.

Pakistan: Minister Boasts of 'Effective Deterrent' to Indian Missiles

BK1805152796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani has said that the country's defenses are strong enough to defend Pakistan's geographic frontiers. Talking to reporters in Lahore this afternoon, he said Pakistan possesses an effective deterrent to counter India's Prithvi missiles and there is no cause for concern about national defense.

Pakistan: ECO Summit Focuses Attention on Accelerating Trade

BK1705152696 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 May 96 p 7

[Editorial: "ECO Network for Prosperity"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) summit at Ashkabad, which also saw the inauguration of a rail line that links the Central Asian states to Iran and Turkey and their maritime outlets, appropriately focused attention on extending the lines of communication and accelerating the trade in the region. A geographically contiguous territory, the ECO states are spread astride important trade routes that link all corners of Asia and Europe to each other and beyond. It is the most strategically placed regional arrangement, which is not only beneficial to other states, but more so to the members. Ironically, trade among the members themselves is much below its potential, while communication links are equally poor.

Iran has managed a breakthrough by opening its new "Silk Route" which follows ancient trade highways, by joining its border rail terminus at Sarakhs to Tejan in Turkmenistan. Pakistan, too, has managed marginal success in connecting the regional and neighbouring states, but it is far from what is possible. With the proposed road and rail link and an oil pipeline running through western Afghanistan to connect the Central Asian states to Pakistan and its seaports still to be implemented, the rich economic potential that could be exploited remains untouched.

This failure to open these much-needed linkages is against the emphasis the ECO places on increasing the quantum of regional economic and trade relations and expanding the communication and transport facilities. However, the summit enabled Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to update an earlier agreement for running a Turkmen gas pipeline to Pakistan through Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. But it is unlikely that the project will see any progress till the Afghan civil war does not end and peace and stability returns.

It is this factor alone that has prevented the Central Asian states from benefiting from the shortest and easiest route to the sea through Pakistan. Although the Iranian link will be equally effective, its outlet is in the Persian Gulf where the situation remains troubled by uncertainty. Pakistan's ports in the south open on the peaceful waters of the Arabian Sea which goes on to join the Indian Ocean and the vast lands in the east and west.

Hopefully, the Ashkabad summit will help in opening the western areas of Afghanistan to international travel. If only this problem is viewed in isolation from the political landscape, it will be easily resolved and prove of immense profit to Afghanistan as well. The proposed new economic highway will bring prosperity to a country that needs it most after years of destructive, internecine strife.

Pakistan: 'Difficulties' Noted in Implementing IMF Conditions

BK1905123296 Karachi DAWN in English 18 May 96 p 1

[Report by Ihtashamul Haque]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, May 17 — Pakistan is facing difficulties in implementing the conditionalities of the IMF in the next budget and the government has decided to arrange meetings between the Fund officials and the "political representatives" to ease out pressure from the Washington based organisation.

Informed sources told Dawn that the visiting IMF mission met here on Thursday [16 May] with State Minister for Finance Makhdoom Shahabuddin and insisted that conditionalities relating to budget deficit, tariffs and monetary expansion should be implemented, failing which Pakistan would not be able to qualify for third trance of 600 million dollars standby loan.

However, the mission was told that there was a duly elected political government in Pakistan which has to take into account lot of "political considerations" while implementing various fiscal policies and that it could not blindly accept IMF conditionalities.

A number of meetings will be arranged between the MNAs [members of National Assembly] of both the government and the opposition with the visiting IMF mission with a view to convince it to be lenient towards Pakistan.

"I have told the IMF mission that PPP [Pakistan People's Party] government would certainly try to achieve 4 percent GDP budget deficit target along with reducing tariffs and restricting undue monetary growth in the next budget but it should not be expected to do every thing without taking into account political considerations", State Minister Makhdoom Shahabuddin said.

He told Dawn that the IMF conditionalities were aimed at implementing structural reform programme with a view to improving socio economic conditions of common man.

"We are arranging IMF mission's meeting with our elected representatives so that it should understand the problems of a political government", he said adding that Pakistan was not being ruled by a Martial Law regime which does not present itself to any kind of accountability.

Pakistan has agreed with the IMF that conditionalities like 4 percent GDP budget deficit, reducing of tariff to 55 percent and achieving 8 percent rate of inflation will be achieved during 1996- 97.

Sources said that Pakistan has made it clear to the IMF that it was unable to reduce its defence budget keeping in view the security situation in the region. The IMF said that it was also asking India to reduce its defence budget and that the Fund was treating both the countries at par on the issue.

Pakistan had allocated Rs. [rupees] 120 billion, out of total capital outlay of Rs. 431 billion for defence in the present budget. And there were reports that the same was expected to be fixed at Rs. 132 billion in the next budget. The prime minister has already assured the military authorities last week at National Defence College that her government had no plans to reduce the defence budget rather it would be increased to meet the services' requirements.

Nevertheless sources said the government has assured the IMF that agriculture tax will be effectively imposed this year.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has deputed a couple of important People's Party MNAs to convince the agriculturist members of the Parliament not to oppose agriculture tax in the next budget which is expected to bring in Rs 5 billion.

Pakistan: Ministers Attend PRC Reception To Commemorate Ties

BK2005042496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 20 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A seven-member parliamentary delegation has gone to Beijing to participate in the preparation of 45th anniversary celebrations of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. It was on 21 May 1951 that the two countries established diplomatic relations.

Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Zhang Chengli, hosted a reception in Islamabad yesterday to mark 45th anniversary of the establishment of Pak-China diplomatic relationship. The reception was attended, among others, by Speaker of National Assembly Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani, and Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali.

The speaker of National Assembly, in a message on the occasion, has said Sino-Pak relations have made tremendous progress in various fields. He said Pakistan and China have cooperated closely on major international issues and jointly promoted the cause of regional and international peace.

Pakistan: Increase in Level of Exports to Hong Kong Noted

BK1605131296 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 11 May 96 pp 1, 10

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Our exports to Hong Kong rose by 43 percent during the last 10 months compared to the corresponding period of last year. From fifth position, now Hong Kong ranks as the second most important export destination for Pakistan after the United States. According to a message received here from Hong Kong $700 million export is targeted for the current financial year. The two-way trade is expected to reach $800 million with balance of trade steeply tilted in Pakistan's favour.

Not only the traditional export items like yarn and fabric have registered substantial increase but also export of non-traditional products like leather, fish and fish preparation, fresh fruit, precious and semi-precious stones have shown similar positive trend.

Efforts are in hand to maintain this well-coveted position.

Hong Kong is engaged in international trade of over $300 billion. Considered to be the most important hub for triangular trade, a large number of multinational buying/sourcing houses are located in Hong Kong. Pakistan's interaction with these business houses contributes more than $1 billion export towards USA and EEC, not reflected in export figures of Hong Kong.

Meaningful engagement with fund managers of leading investment bank, brokerage and finance houses have resulted in substantial foreign indirect investment in Pakistan stocks. Regular meetings are held for briefing on Pakistan.

Impressionable participation in major international exhibitions on textile and leather this year have thrown up opportunities to conclude contracts worth more than $100 million.

No opportunity was missed in match-making of trading and investment partners.

CEPA of Hopeful Holding Hong Kong head the list of foreign direct investment in power generation with initial $1,800 billion. Sizeable foreign investments have also been made in projects like pharmaceuticals, electronics, hotel, food processing and milk industry.

Chambers of commerce and other business circles are addressed regularly providing highlights of Pakistani export and investment potential.

Currently, business under active negotiation is regarding Pakistan-Hong Kong direct air connection, establishment of Pakistan- Hong Kong businessmen council, single-country exhibition planned for 1997.

Pakistan: Army Authorities Begin Investigation in Embezzlement Case

BK1605130796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 15 May 96 pp 1, 13

[Report by Syed Nadeem]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD — The army authorities have finally made a move to take those to task who have committed embezzlements running into billions in the Military Engineering Services [MES], Rawalpindi.

A series of enquiries were initiated at last after the bunglings were brought to the notice of no less than Chief of the Army Staff [COAS] General Jehangir Karamat. The bunglings have been going on for the past many years.

But the influence that the MES officials enjoyed through the courtesy of some senior functionaries did not allow the action to be taken.

But the process of accountability started when the COAS was informed about the rampant corruption. Charges were so strong that it also came up for discussion in the last conference of Personal Staff Officers.

The Army Chief then directed Chief of General Staff Chaudhry Iftikhar Ali. The instructions then trickled down further about a particular case of dubious transactions worth Rs [rupees] 50 million just in the month of

April. A departmental inquiry was conducted B Colonel Afzal and Executive Engineers Anwarul Haq and Mushtaq Cheema.

The team found that the entire allotment of Rs 500 million was made to various Garrison Engineers without any entries or documents. Senior Engineer [SE] Akhtar Hussain was probed who conceded having made the allocation without informing the approving authority.

As the investigation went on startling facts began to unfold about many other past instances. The team then seized all the cheque books and relevant record and started looking deeper into the scandal.

In the meantime, SE Akhtar Hussain moved a representation to the COAS against Director of Works and Chief Engineer Brigadier Faizullah Cheema who had been entrusted to look after the enquiry.

It didn't help because by then the army high-ups had realised the extent of damage that was being caused to the name of the armed forces.

Brig Faizullah Cheema, while confirming the embezzlements, also took a bold and daring stand. He made it clear that either the culprits will be brought to book or he should not stay in his present position.

Interestingly, despite many complaints, no action was taken when Lt Gen. (Retd) Naseer Akhtar was the Quarter Master General [QMG] who retired on April 17. But the new QMG, Lt Gen. Mohammad Afzal Khan, who is also from the Engineer Corps. decided to act decisively.

He and the other authorities concerned were of the firm view that army's Corps of Engineers in general and the MES in particular should be saved the embarrassment that was coming its way due to fake payments and illegal transactions.

They also resolved to recover the missing allocations which go out of the defence budget.

If somebody had earlier woken up to the scam, billions of defence budget could have been spent on army's welfare projects and proper maintenance of cantonment areas.

Now another comprehensive inquiry is being instituted, headed by a Brigadier, to investigate all the embezzlements in the MES. It will hold on-the-ground checking of records, determine where the money has gone and lay responsibility on the culprits.

There is also a strong possibility that the guilty ones be handed over to army's Special Investigation Bureau for thorough interrogation.

As part of the inquiry, Commander MES Colonel Mohammad Afzal, Garrison Engineer [GE] (East) Major Ijaz Ahmed and some other civilian staff have already been transferred to preempt any tampering of the record.

Posting out orders of Additional Chief Engineer Colonel Jehangir Alam and GE (West) Zakim Khan Mashud are said to be on their way.

As they have managed to get away so far, the officers in trouble have again started resorting to all fair and unfair means in order to escape the law.

As for the list of those whose 'achievements' would be investigated include: Lt Col Mohammad Idrees (Cmdr MES), Major Ijaz (GE East), Zakim Khan Mashud (GE West), Akhtar Chaudhry (SE), Chaudhry Zafarullah (SDO) [Subdivisional Officer], Chaudhry Nasrullah (SDO), representatives of Controller Military Accounts, Shaukat (Head Clerk), and two contractors Malik Khalid (FRIDGCO) and Nasir (SONIC) [expansions unknown].

The information sent to the COAS claimed that this "MES Mafia" used to thrive by obliging senior army officials. Millions were spent on the renovation and furnishing of residences of their benefactors and then an exaggerated amount would be shown in the books.

This must be one of those rare instances where the army authorities had to take action against its officials who were committing corruption just like any other government department.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Radio Confirms Armed Forces' Complete Control Over Jaffna

BK1705122896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 17 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Government troops are now in complete control of the entire Jaffna Peninsula after driving out the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists during Operation Riviresa (?Three). Official report says that the security forces which began their advance at first light on Wednesday have captured Point Pedro area by 1000 yesterday. An official spokesman said that they had now established control over the Vadamarachchi division. At Point Pedro, another landmark was captured by the advancing troops. This was the harbor and a focal point in the LTTE's strategy against the government forces. It was from the harbor that the Sea Tigers launched their covert attacks against the Sri Lankan naval craft and food ships and also missile attacks on Sri Lankan aircraft. This had also been a training base for the Sea Tigers and a safe port for their tracking boats. Reports said that the terrorists did not offer the troops any resistance. Instead, they fled the area on seeing the advancing troops. MI-24 helicopters of the SLAF [Sri Lanka Air Force] engaged the terrorists fleeing in the direction of Mannar Kadu, southeast of Point Pedro. The Sri Lanka Navy vessels are out at sea to cut off any terrorist movement southward from Point Pedro area. Another source said that this was a minutely planned operation by the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force geared to meet any contingencies.

According to other reports, a soldier was killed in action during the operation while the casualties among the LTTE were not yet known. Reports say that a large number of civilians who had stayed behind in Vadamarachchi have been liberated by the security forces from the clutches of the LTTE. Meanwhile, an official spokesman said that the troops were in the process of clearing the newly captured areas and this operation was being continued.

Sri Lanka: Government Troops Continue Clearing Point Pedro

BK1805123496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English
1045 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Government troops are continuing to clear townships and villages in Point Pedro. The troops are also in the process of clearing the Point Pedro-Kodikamam main road of mines and other explosive devices laid by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists. According to the Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry, the troops cleared one of the main Sea Tiger bases at Katkovalam, southeast of Point Pedro, on Thursday [16 May]. There were no Sea Tigers present at that time. The troops recovered a dozen front end loaders used by the LTTE in the Tumpalai area. These were in working order.

Naval personnel assisted by engineers of the Sri Lanka Army are now repairing the damaged jetty at the Point Pedro harbor. The troops during their advance located a series of well-constructed bunkers abandoned by the terrorists. The LTTE had laid mines on the approaches to the Velvettiturai, Tondamannar, and Pulaveli areas. Assisted by the engineers, the security forces are cautiously moving into these areas while clearing the mines to avoid unnecessary casualties. On Thursday, one soldier was killed in action and two were wounded.

The Operational Headquarters said that a large number of civilians who had stayed behind in their homes were being provided with urgently required humanitarian assistance by the troops. The Manthihai government hospital in Point Pedro continues to function under the supervision of the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross]. Civilians in the newly liberated areas have expressed their desire to live in peace. They have requested the security forces to remain in the area and to ensure that the LTTE terrorists do not return. The civilians have also stated that they were subject to hardships and heavy devastations by the LTTE. They have expressed their satisfaction and thanked the officials and soldiers for liberating them from the clutches of the Tigers.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Flees to 'Jungles' Following Government Attack

BK1905120996 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English
1045 GMT 19 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists have withdrawn to the jungles as government forces consolidated their gains after crushing a rebel stronghold in the northern Jaffna Peninsula. The LTTE —which fled from Jaffna and relocated its headquarters to the northern mainland 65 km south to Jaffna — was again on the run, residents said. They said the LTTE had moved all its facilities to the jungles of Mullaittivu after suffering its worst military setback at the hands of security forces in the peninsula. The final stroke came on Thursday [16 May] when Army troops took the rebel's final foothold on the peninsula by capturing the small port of Point Pedro on the Jaffna Peninsula. Army engineers (?removed) the [word indistinct] mines and improvised explosive devices at Point Pedro. Troops of Operation Riviresa Three captured Point Pedro on Thursday after an overnight [word indistinct] that left one soldier dead and two wounded. The Defense Ministry said troops are now clearing mines and improvised explosive devices.

The LTTE terrorists have now resorted to harassment of civilians in a desperate bid to bring disrepute to the security forces. Operational Headquarters say that a small group of LTTE terrorists dressed in uniforms similar to Army personnel had visited Mantuvil village in the Thenamarachchi area yesterday. They demanded identity cards from a group of civilians. When the civilians refused to surrender their identity cards the terrorists had stabbed some of the civilians in anger. Three women suffered serious injuries due to the stabbing and succumbed to their injuries at the Manthihai Hospital in Point Pedro. Several thousand registered persons now residing in Vavuniya are eagerly waiting to return to their homes in the liberated areas of the Jaffna Peninsula. According to the Vani service of the SLBC, the displaced Jaffna civilians are registering their names with the Vavuniya government agent for resettlement.

Already over 4,000 people have registered. They will be sent to Jaffna in batches of 2,000 each. All returnees will be provided with dry rations and other essential items.

Sri Lanka: Report Details Jaffna's Return to 'Normalcy'

BK2005022996 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER in English 19 May 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The areas Liberated in the Jaffna peninsula by the Security Forces are fast returning to normalcy. According to a report those who returned to Valikamam sector of the peninsula have been offered facilities to begin their day to day life.

The Government Agent [GA] Jaffna in his report said that 70 per cent of the returnees have been re-settled in their own houses. The report further said that only ten percent of the houses are completely damaged and the rest have only minor damages.

It has been noted that of the more than 200,000 displaced persons consisting of 60,000 families 52,418 families have been re-settled in their original places in the Assistant Government Agent divisions of Velanair and Kayts, Jaffna Town, Nallur, Chenkanai, Sandilipay, Uduvil, Tellippolai and Kopay. Arrangements are also under way to issue identity cards to those who returned.

One hundred thousand ID's will be issued to the returnees within the next couple of weeks. Nearly 3500 families that lived in the islands who were displaced in 1990 are in the process of getting back to their homes.

Until the transport facilities are fully geared up, transport services are being conducted free of charge in the routes from Jaffna to Kayts, Kodikamam, Kuppilan, Avorankal and Urumpirai.

The GA has also informed that he has during the week received the following quantity of necessary foods from KKS stores. Rice 412 MT, flour 190 MT, sugar 174 MT, dhall 29 MT.

And these have been issued through MPCS. Apart from this, free rations were issued through the following 75 branches of MPCS to the displaced families. Jaffna 21 branches, Nallur 14 branches, Manipay 08 branches, Pandathrippu 02 branches, Chenkanai 05 branches, Alaveddy 04 branches, Atchuvely 10 branches and Neerevely 01 branch.

Further, 02 CWE outlets and 08 franchise shops are also engaged in distribution of foods.

In the same time some shops of private traders are also being opened now in the Jaffna city. Chunnakam and Thirunelvely markets have started the purchase and sales of agricultural and other domestic products.

One of the prime areas that was considered is the field of education. Up to now, 200 schools which is 30 percent of the total strength have been reopened. Fifty percent of the 4000 strong teachers force have reported for work. Around 7,000 students (30-35 percent) are attending schools.

According to the Acting Vice Chancellor 35 percent of the academic and non academic staff of the Jaffna University have reported for duty. The University is expected to be re-opened by middle of next month.

The attendance in the various govt. departments and institutions have improved. The Kachcheri and 14 all AGA offices are functioning except one. The office attendance is reported to be at 60 percent now. Two hundred-ninty Grama Niladhari's out of 435 have reported for duty.

Functions of the Post Offices are becoming normal. Twelve Post Offices and 17 sub-post offices have been re-opened. Mail is being received through vessels that carry food to North. Last week, Lanka Muditha had carried 178 mail bags to the peninsula and it is now on the increase.

Five wards of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital are being utilized. Attendance of the health sector personnel are - doctors 44, Para- Medical staff 24, others 264.

All financial institutions and banks and rural banks have started to function. The Bank of Ceylon and People's Bank have opened all their branches except three. Hatton National Bank and other Commercial banks have started to function in their original places. All 10 rural bank branches of the Jaffna Multi Purpose Coop Society are functioning.

The GA in his report also said that pension vouchers for the month of April 1996 were received and the payments to the displaced and the non-displaced pensioners were made accordingly.

An emergency agricultural programme has also been prepared to bring 250 hectares of land under production of local vegetables during the Yala harvest 96.

Sri Lanka: President Returns From 'Successful' Trip to Japan

BK1805115596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 18 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga returned to the country after a four-day successful official tour of Japan last night. During her visit, she had discussions with the emperor, the prime minister, and leading investors. A senior official of the Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry told our reporter that the president's bilateral talks with Japanese Prime Minister Hasimoto were beneficial to Sri Lanka. The agreement providing the highest amount of credit given by the Japanese Government to Sri Lanka so far was signed. It has been provided on very concessionary terms.

The Japanese prime minister during the talks with Mrs. Kumaratunga stressed his government's full support to rehabilitate areas in the north once peace was established there. Efforts made by the president to resolve the ethnic conflict came in for special praise by the Japanese leader.

At the start of the tour, the president met leading Japanese investors and discussed possible investments in the island. These talks were very successful and as a result BOI [Board of Investment] Chairman Tilan Wijaysinghe in a special interview with the SLBC said that the results could be seen within the next few months.

Last afternoon the Sri Lankan president visited Osaka, a leading business town in Japan. There she had talks with prominent businessmen. Welcoming the president, Governor of Osaka (Konok Yokihama) assured every support to the president's untiring efforts to attract Japanese investors into the island. Ministers Lakshman Kadirgamar and Lakshman Jayakody and Deputy Minister Jeyaraj Fernandopulle were also present.

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